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August 2005
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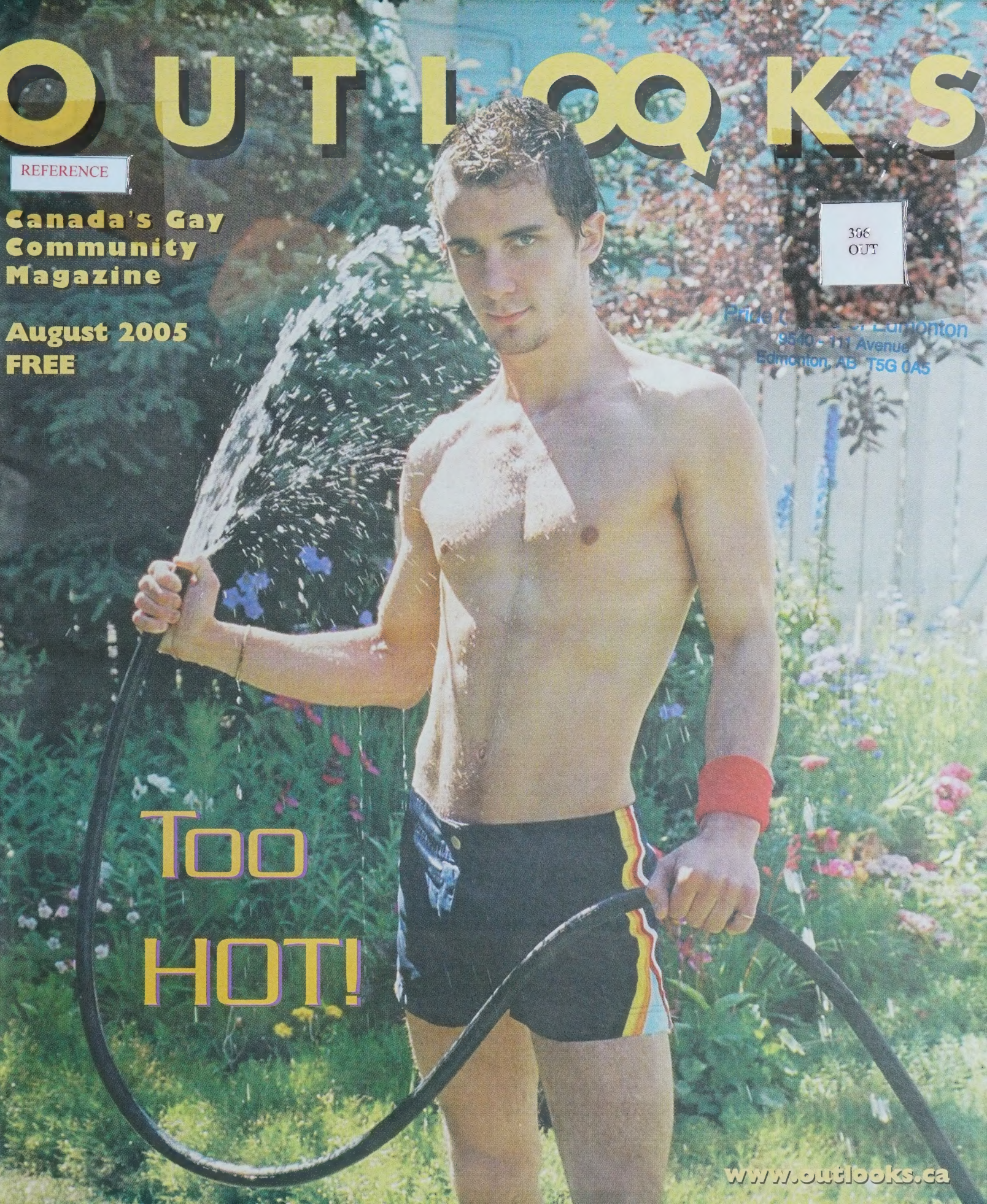

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On The Cover:
Charles photographed by Mark Bennett on location on the grounds of 'Chez Brooks'

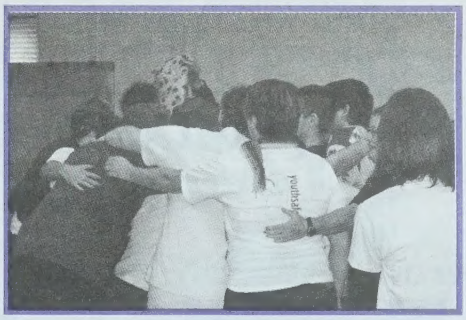
what's where

HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU...

Over the years, a great number of GLBT individuals (like artist Persimmon Blackbridge, portrayed here by photographer Susan Stewart) have made contributions both to our community and Canadian culture in general. Dale Smith reports on the latest round of portraits commissioned by the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives to honour the achievements of such people.

DOWN 'N' DIRTY

Once again, the Canadian Rockies International Gay Rodeo proved to be a highlight of summer 2005 for its many participants and attendees. Here we bring you a few highlights within the highlight, caught on film by Mark Bennett and Barry Piersdorff



HUDDLED AROUND THE 'fYre'

Edmonton's Camp fYrefly is a chance for GLBT youth from across the nation to gather and learn leadership skills that will benefit them—and our community—for many years to come. Guest writer Marjorie Wonham has the lowdown...

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LETTERS

The Alberta Rockies Gay Rodeo Association (ARGRA) would love to thank all of the many volunteers, retail vendors, association members, rodeo contestants, rodeo officials, rodeo sponsors and, of course, all of the wonderful fans who came out to Symon's Valley Ranch to make this year's rodeo—our 12th Anniversary Canadian Rockies International Rodeo—such an incredible success! We survived the rain!

We had visitors from all over western Canada, the U.S. and overseas who all helped make this the best rodeo yet. Many thanks to those who travelled far and wide to come to Calgary to help us celebrate and host the best rodeo in the IGRA circuit.

Thanks again, and see you next year in 2006, June 30 to July 2!

Greg Holsworth

Director, Public Relations

ARGRA 2005

Attention *Outlooks*:

Stephen Harper has suggested gay marriage is a matter that can be corrected in a new parliament. I sometimes wonder what actual wording was going through his mind, but that is irrelevant. What Harper is ultimately vocalizing is that marriage between two women or two men is wrong and/or immoral and should not be permitted. Ironically he doesn't include his haircut in that assessment.

First, let's start with the Bible, which defines marriage as 'a legal union between one man and one woman.' This must not have applied to Jacob, who had two wives and, since they had trouble producing children, he had slave girls and concubines as well. Further, King David had six wives as well as concubines. That kind of throws the commandment of 'Thou shall not commit adultery' out the window, if you ask me.

The Apostle Paul condemned unnatural behaviour and sodomy in his writings, but what did Jesus have to say about it? Nothing. Jesus' teachings revolved around such ideals as loving your neighbour as yourself and anti-discrimination. As far as Roman Christianity is concerned, the words of the Son of God should be heeded before those of his followers.

In 1804, Nicholas Biddle, of Lewis and Clark, discovered that effeminate Indians in certain tribes were completely accepted, raised as women and then married to men. Pagan religion was openly scoffed at with the coming of the 'civilized' church from Europe and the practice ultimately ended.

Finally, our own Charter of Rights and Freedoms states that every individual is entitled to 'freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression.' If two people think about commitment, believe they belong together, are of the opinion they would like to be official, then why shouldn't they express it through marriage?

My guess is that Stephen Harper has a different version.

We live in a society where convicted killers or sex predators, once released, are encouraged to once again become viable members of society. This is laudable and I am 100 percent behind letting people become viable members of society once they have done their time. Everyone deserves a second chance. We are expected as citizens not to discriminate against these people who have taken lives or committed rape.

Homosexuals would like society to be non-discriminatory towards them because they would like to legalize their unions. Which scenario is easier for you to accept?

M. Christopher

Via e-mail

Dear *Outlooks*,

[*Project Runway* winner] Jay McCarroll rocks! Thank you for connecting with him and delivering such an enjoyable interview [*Outlooks*, July 2005]. It was cool to see someone break out of the "cookie cutter" mold of gay stereotypes and do so in such a public way. I hope Jay's future is bright and full of success—as someone who takes risks in both his professional and personal life he truly deserves it.

R. Prather

Vancouver ▼

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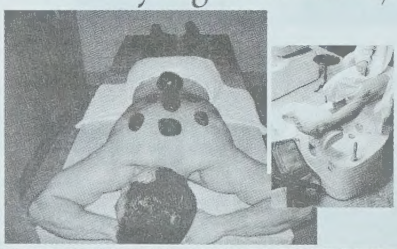

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What really matters

By David Crosson

Looking back, July 2005 was a memorable one, indeed. This Canada Day was a particularly proud occasion, given the fact that Bill C-38 had just made its way through Parliament and was moving on to the Senate debate phase in the process of becoming law. Furthermore, July marked the passing of my life into its thirty-eighth year, a curious relief because I always think odd numbers make people sound older for some reason. Add to this a firm decision on what was going to be used for my new bathroom flooring (after ages of deliberation, I might add) and the month was pretty much a slice of heaven.

One of the other things that made this past July special was the fact that, for the first time in my life, I had occasion to attend a same-sex wedding. Actually, it was a same-sex wedding *reception* (the happy couple tied the knot in the 'legitimate' province of Ontario some months earlier), but the giddiness was valid, nonetheless. Of course, I had attended many weddings in my life, marked primarily in memory by what I had selected to wear on each momentous occasion. True, I will pay some degree of attention to my attire for this one, but for the most part it will stand out for "bigger" and perhaps more historical reasons.

One thing that will forever stay in my mind is an encounter I had while trying to select a gift for the happy couple. To be honest, I've never actually made use of a registry service when selecting a wedding present (the bulk of my offerings were made on the coattails of my parents in what were then-identifiable as 'days of youth'), but this time I decided I was going to partake in all the trappings and traditions. I soon found myself in a department store staring at an odd-looking computer screen perched atop a steel pedestal. Despite having worked with computers for the past eight-and-a-half years, describing my skills with same as "rudimentary" would be a very generous assessment, indeed. Just as I turned away to abort my mission, I was approached by a saleslady, the sort you would find in pretty much any large department store from coast-to-coast. She was definitely a veteran of the trade, wearing her nametag and years of experience with evident pride. (You could tell she had been with the company long enough to remember when women wore long dresses and corsages to the annual staff Christmas party.)

"Would you like some help, Sir?" she asked, and in her case I believed that she genuinely wanted to give it.

"Yes, please," I replied. "I don't know how this damned thing works."

She smiled, obviously pleased that, at least on the technological front, she clearly had the upper hand on a (relatively speaking) "young person".

"I need to find a registry list for my friend Jami," I told her. "Jami Symons."

"Jami's the bride, is she?" The saleslady asked as she poked away at the buttons on the wedding gizmo.

"No," I said, "Jami's the groom. His spouse's name is Daniel."

"Dan-*yell*?" She repeated—sort of—doing her utmost to verbally append an additional 'l' and 'e'.

"No, Daniel—like Boone or the one in the Bible with all the lions."

"Oh."

If I'm not mistaken, I think I heard a few gears whir and click before she allowed a slight smile. "Oh," she said again, this time in recognition that such a combination could, in fact, pop out of her bridal registry computer. She seemed a bit startled, but even more so pleased by this, like a child who has successfully used a bank machine for the first time without its parents' prompting. "Here we are, Daniel and James—that's your friend Jami, right?" I nodded and she printed out the full registry, then handed the sheaf of papers to me after brief perusal of their contents.

I looked over the list, which contained the usual suspects in a new household, if perhaps a bit higher on the 'glam meter'. "Any advice?" I asked. It was nice (and a bit daunting) to have so many options available to me on what was usually such a straightforward retail quest.

The saleslady paused for a moment, as if very carefully considering her words. "Well," she began slowly, "I wouldn't thank you for black sheets—they're a nightmare for attracting lint, you know."

"I suppose they are," I agreed, not usually one to consider the practical aspects of anything.

"But, it's their house," she continued. "To each his own."

"Good point," I said. I turned away to start my spree, then turned back again. "By the way, does any of this bother you at all?"

"Nope; it takes all kinds" she replied. "If two people want to get married that's none of my business. But I'm telling you, I'd still think twice about those black sheets."

"I'll keep that in mind; thank you," I said, then set out into the housewares department for real this time.

After no small amount of time, I eventually gave up my search, at least for the moment. But, even though I didn't purchase a present for them that particular day, I hardly left the store empty-handed. What I came away with was a greater understanding of what makes this a great country to call home, namely an attitude of "live and let live" that supersedes all others. Even when the issue at hand is a major one, like lint on black sheets. ▼

OUTLOOKS

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Contributing Writers:

Charlene Lichtenstein, John Coulbourn, David Crosson, Shaun Proulx, Dale Smith, Ralph Higgins, John Ayres, Peter Carlyle-Gordge, Marjorie Wonham, Gerard MacMullin

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Outlooks Mailing Address:
Box 439, Suite 100,
1039 17th Avenue S.W.
Calgary, Alberta T2T 0B2
Phone: (403) 228-1157
Fax: (403) 228-7735
Toll-Free Fax: 1-877-885-6657
Outlooks Toronto:
Local (416) 531-1483
michael@outlooks.ca
Toll-Free (866) 645-0113
Calgary Office Toll-Free:
1-888-228-1157
Primary E-mail: main@outlooks.ca
Editorial: editor@outlooks.ca
Sales: sales@outlooks.ca
Graphics: graphics@outlooks.ca
World Wide Web: www.outlooks.ca

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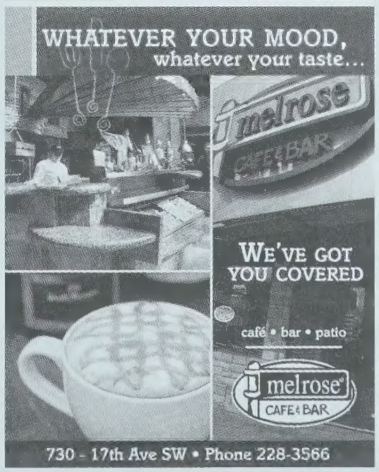

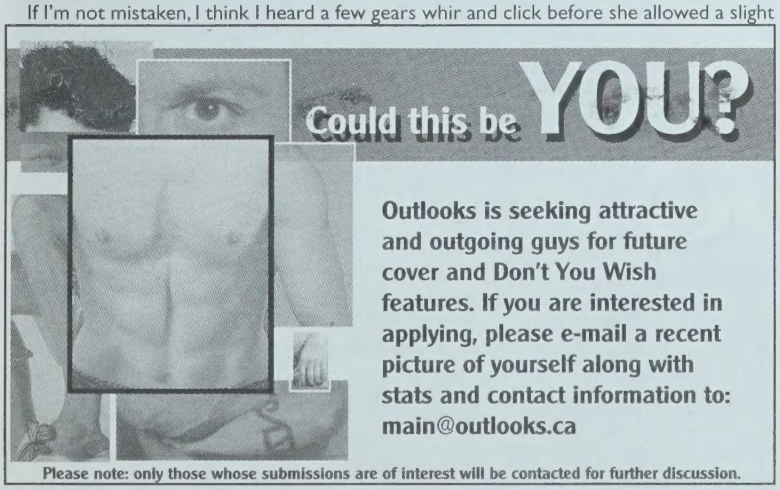

From pundit to pulpit

By John Coulbourn

There's a new word springing up on the editorial pages of right wing publications these days. The word is 'punditocracy' and, try as I might, I can't seem to find it in any edition of the various dictionaries at my disposal. Still, by checking out the context in which it is used and investigating its obvious etymology—"pundit" meaning "a learned person" and "cracy" meaning "rule of"—I've been able to figure out what it means. Or at least what writers think they mean when they use it.

And, surprise, surprise, it's not very nice.

The term 'pundit', you see, like the term 'liberal,' seems to have defied all rules of numeric logic and miraculously morphed into a four-letter word of late—at least in the sort of circles favoured by editorialists of the right wing variety.

Not surprisingly, the pundits who offend these editorialists are—drum roll please—fellow editorialists who don't agree with them. Therefore, by the lights of anyone who would use a term like 'punditocracy,' rule by pundits is not a good thing.

Not at all.

As readers, of course, it is left to us to figure out that the dark side is run by the intellectual elite, while it is good, common, honest folk (like those using words like 'punditocracy') who are on the side of the angels.

What they are feverishly hoping, of course, is that in the heat of whatever debate is raging, we won't notice that they are feeling a little peevish because they obviously aren't being taken as seriously as the very pundits they decry—and, further, that they would give key pieces of their anatomies to wield the kind of power they disparage in their opponents.

Still, having figured that all out, it got me thinking about the verbal camouflage used by the right wing press in the recent contretemps that surrounded the legalization of same-sex marriage across the nation.

Right-leaning editorialists, for instance, have complained about the fact that legalized same-sex marriage is not the will of the people, hoping at the same time that we will forget the number of times they've decried the fact that the majority of voters in Canada are so stupid as to keep electing Liberals to Parliament.

Why should the "will of the people" be any less important when it comes to electing governments than when it comes to enacting laws? And what does any of it have to do with protecting the rights of minorities, which is finally what it is all about anyway?

Further, they cry, the legalization of same-sex marriage is certain to result in the prosecution of those who oppose it. As proof, they cite the fact that churches that have used their non-profit status to raise money to advocate against same-sex marriage have now been forced to cease and desist at the risk of losing their tax-exempt status. This conveniently ignores the fact that the churches in question were clearly breaking the law of the land, of course.

No, they scream instead, politics has no business in the churches of the nation—but a bit of rational thought will tell you that what landed 'politics' in the middle of the churches of the nation was the determination of the churches to meddle in the politics of the nation. What's more, a quick perusal of the facts reveals several things, all of them germane to the discussions at hand.

First, it is gay-bashing and not Christian-bashing that appears to have spiked in Edmonton. Second, it was a church that supported same-sex unions that was bombed in the USA recently, not one that opposed it.

And finally, ministers of many stripes are still getting away with saying about gays the kind of hateful things that deservedly earned David Ahenakew a stiff fine and expulsion from the Order of Canada when he said them about Jews.

One can't help but wonder if maybe the reason these guys don't like pundits is that pundits have a habit of saying what they mean. ▼

John Coulbourn is a native Albertan who lived for many years in Calgary. He now makes his home in Toronto, where he covers performing arts for the Toronto Sun.

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Looking for a bit of Euphoria

By Gerard MacMullin

"We need your help," cried a huge ad, which recently ran in a Vancouver newspaper. The impressive layout—four pages, no less—promoted the virtues of Euphoria, a local gay men's health conference that happened in June 2004.

"We want your input and support," the ad pleaded.

Being gay, health conscious, and having this huge column to fill, I practically fell over myself scrambling for the phone. I'm always willing to offer support, especially when a newspaper asks for it! Besides, I'm euphoric about Euphoria. Okay, maybe I'm a little too naïve, as well.

"Gay men's health has been defined almost exclusively by HIV and AIDS for almost two decades now," Phillip Banks, of AIDS Vancouver, said in promoting Euphoria 2004. "There is no doubt that HIV remains a significant health concern for gay guys, but it is time to acknowledge that it is part of a larger and more complex set of health challenges…" he added.

Since I was disappointed when Euphoria didn't pop up again in June of this year, I was delighted to see the fresh call for community involvement. "It's together we'll make our visions of the community a reality," the ad promised. Being a big believer in togetherness, I contacted Gayway, a storefront resource centre launched two years ago by AIDS Vancouver. Service Coordinator, Omar Dominguez, explained his boss was out of town, so work on the community vision thing might have to wait a week or so. Unfortunately, a week is an eternity considering my mid-summer deadline and the fact that health issues don't take holidays.

Summer is prime time for the spread of HIV, in its various drug resistant mutations, as healthy decisions often take a backseat to warm weather, hot beachwear and frosty cocktails. Since the last Euphoria, a meningitis outbreak killed at least three gay men and had health authorities warning Vancouver guys to stop kissing and sharing drinks. Thousands of free vaccines were administered. Crystal meth is ripping through the community like wildfire, while we politely debate whether young men too wasted to wear shoes really care about wearing condoms.

In short, we're in desperate need of a little euphoria right now, so I was delighted when Dominguez agreed to an interview later that week to help stimulate interest in Euphoria and health issues.

I love the conference's holistic approach and brash attitude. I think it's great to have a forum that allows gay men to tackle overlooked issues like self-esteem and techniques like art therapy. I think exploring body image, aging and interracial dating is far more fun than another humourless lecture on wearing rubbers. Who wouldn't warm up to a conference cocky enough to headline anal health and pleasure?

I arranged my week to accommodate the interview, and I was really excited about seeing the piece published just as Vancouver was about to celebrate Pride Week. But just hours before our date, Dominguez left a voice mail saying the Q&A was scrubbed. So much for Gayway's mission statement encouraging gay men "to share knowledge, experience and resources."

"There's not much I can tell you right now," said Dominguez, "…I can't elaborate." He stressed that any further comment would have to come from his boss, who was out of town until after *Outlooks* went to press.

I was puzzled. I'm not after a Pulitzer Prize, just a few simple quotes on a feel-good event. I immediately phoned to say the sudden cancellation seemed odd, given the four-page appeal for community support. Why make such a high profile plea when no one is available for follow up?

"People have personal lives," Dominguez offered.

The cleverly worded newspaper campaign advised us that "the opportunity to build new relationships and share experiences is fundamental to the gay community."

We can sure talk the talk; but realistically, in the middle of summer, who's got time to walk the walk? ▼

Gerard MacMullin is a writer and broadcaster who lives in Vancouver's West End.

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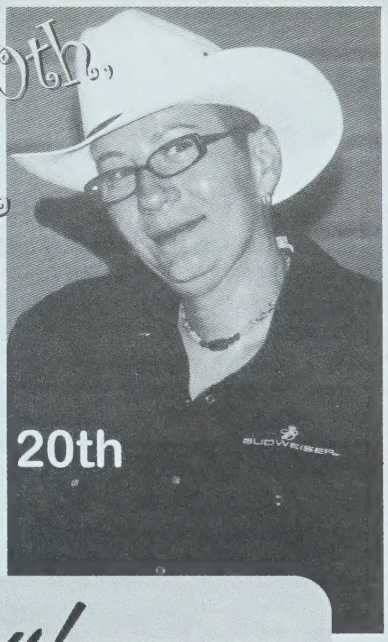

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Same-sex 'service' men

By Ralph Higgins

Mrs. Patrick Campbell once gave as her now-famous opinion that she didn't care what people did as long as they didn't do it in the streets and frighten the horses. Increasingly, this enlightened attitude is one shared by the majority of Canadians regarding gay rights and same-sex marriage. Yet, even in this gentler social climate, the wedding that took place May 3, 2005, at St. Mark's Chapel in Greenwood, Nova Scotia still managed to make headlines. You see, St. Mark's Chapel is on the Canadian Forces Base and Paul and Gerald, the two men who were married by Reverend Robyn Brown-Hewitt, are both members of the Canadian Forces. This same-gender marriage of soldiers on a Canadian Forces base was the first in Canada—and, by extension, in North America!

Reverend Robyn Brown-Hewitt, minister of the Wolfville Pastoral Charge United Church of Canada, officiates over the marriage of Paul and Gerald at St. Mark's Chapel CFB Greenwood.

Paul and Gerald declined to be interviewed for this article, preferring to retain as much privacy as such a public event would allow them. I did, however, speak with Captain John Pulchny, the Public Relations Officer for the base and a twenty-eight-year member of the Forces. I asked Capt. Pulchny what the reaction had been within the rank and file to Paul and Gerald's wedding.

"None really. The military has changed since the early nineties," he says. "There is no policy against gays or lesbians in the Canadian military."

When I suggested to Captain Pulchny that some people would like to view the military as the last bastion of conservatism and possessing a restrictive view of traditional values, he was quick to answer, "Well, they'd be wrong!"

He further explained that all policies regarding dismissal from the military for homosexuality were cancelled in 1993. And, as of 2003, a same-sex couple wishing to use a Canadian Forces chapel as a place of blessing for their marriage could do so, providing at least one of them was a member of the Forces and the marriage was conducted in accordance with the law of the province in which the marriage was to take place.

The directive from the Department of National Defence states that every CF chaplain will receive all couples who come to them—regardless of sexual orientation—with respect and dignity. If, for reasons of faith or conscience he or she is not able to conduct the ceremony, then the chaplain must arrange for a colleague to do so. In the case of Paul and Gerald, the chaplain, Padre David Greenwood, led the couple through the marriage preparation course but, since he is an Anglican, was obliged to find a United Church minister (Rev. Brown-Hewitt) to actually conduct the service. Padre Greenwood remarked that he was very proud to have been part of the process and hoped that other gays and lesbians would come forward to marry on base.

For these two men are no Oscar Wildes, no effete languid types dangling cologne-soaked handkerchiefs from limp wrists. Paul and Gerald rank among the über-masculine: they are soldiers!

While both Lt.-Cmdr. Greenwood and Captain Pulchny went to some length to portray the modern Canadian military as a tolerant, open organization, one can't help but wonder if the day-to-day picture for queer soldiers is quite as Rosie (O'Donnell) as they would have us believe. Given the negative media attention that the Canadian Forces has been subjected to over the last decade, a happy love story must come as a great relief to those whose job it is to keep the shine on the service brass. Certainly the Canadian official policy stands in sharp contrast with the ludicrous American practice of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell". Canadian soldiers are not only free to tell, they can also say: I do! I do!

Amid all the acrimonious wrangling among politicians over Bill C-38 and the fear-mongering attempted by some religious groups that gay marriage would lead to the downfall of society comes this story. The example of Gerald and Paul flies in the face of every right wing stereotype of homosexuals. For these two men are no Oscar Wildes, no effete languid types dangling cologne-soaked handkerchiefs from limp wrists. Paul and Gerald rank among the über-masculine: they are soldiers! None of which makes them more nor less deserving of the choice to marry, but in the public mind, their example creates a vastly different image of who gays are.

Paul and Gerald were surely aware of this; how could they not be? Their marriage was an act of love, compelled by circumstances to become an act of courage. Any of us who have ever taken part in any kind of rally or public protest knows the last minute, gulping hesitation about standing up and being counted. One can only imagine how much more fraught with doubt and questions this decision must have been.

Captain Pulchny mentioned that over all, the wedding was not a big media story. Still, the impact on the psyche of queer Canadians has been significant.

I wonder if perhaps there was not more controversy simply because we are Canadians. While we may get worked up about issues like the threatened dissolution of the country or the price of gasoline, when it comes to social issues we are generally quite mild-mannered folk who don't like to make too much of a fuss. When presented with a *fait accompli*, we generally shrug and move on.

The passage of Bill C-38 represents a large step forward for Canadians. Let us look toward the day when two people, regardless of gender, can stand in the presence of whatever spiritual authority is meaningful to them, surrounded by the loving support of family and friends and have their marriage be regarded not as front page news, but rather as a simple love story.

Congratulations, Gerald and Paul! ▼

Ralph Higgins is a writer, columnist and book/movie reviewer living in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia.

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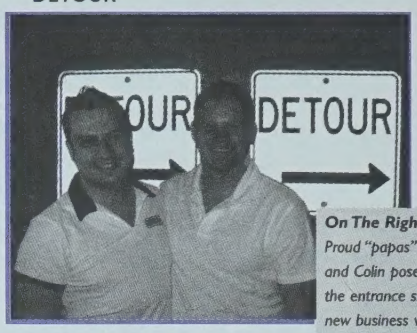
Burger Brigade
Randy (centre) with his "grillfriends Lorrie (left) and Michele, is all ready to send buckaroos and buckarettes off to the CRIR full 'n' happy.

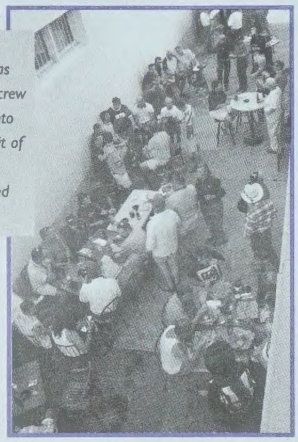
Setting The Stage
Country vocalist Justin James, in from Nashville, gives the crowd a taste of what's to come, namely a weekend full of fun and great music up at Symon's Valley Ranch.

'The Papers Are Signed' Celebration
DETOUR



On The Right Road
Proud "papas" Terence (left) and Colin pose in front of the entrance sign of their new business venture.

Survivor Party
MONEY-PENNIES



Feeding Trough
Seeing as the weather was nice, the Money-Pennies crew herded hungry revelers into the side driveway for a bit of a nosh. Best of all? The leftovers can just be hosed away!

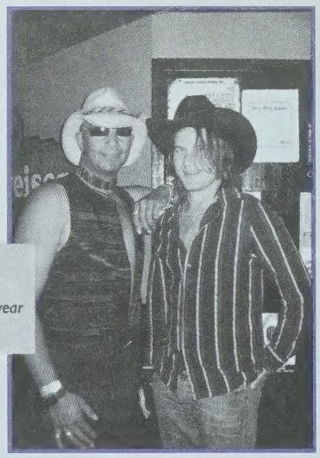
Farewell Serenade
Special guest performer Patrick Masse gave the "survivors" one last dose of C&W music—that is, until the Stampede rolled around three days later...

Why Is A Gay Guy Grabbing My Breast?!
Ali grins and bears it as pal Josh (right) cops a quick feel up front. And look at Craig in the back there, lookin' all sweet and innocent!

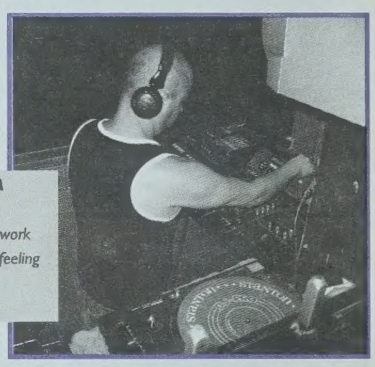
A Feast Of Friends
A group of happy campers—er, eaters—await their "last supper" of the rodeo weekend. Pictured from left are: Darren, Kevin, Mel, Rick, Labbatt rep Jordan, Teresa and Megan

Glamour Shot
Troy and Kal show us how it's really done—those hats are so jaunty you'd swear they were Easter bonnets, wouldn't you?

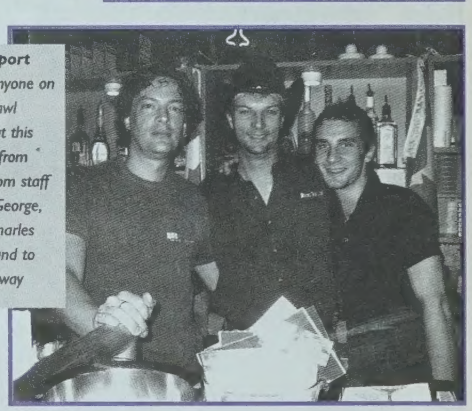
Pub Crawl
METRO KICK-OFF



I'd Like A 'Table And A Booth
Detour DJ Ward hard at work making sure everyone is feeling appropriately "spin-ny".



Staff Support
Not that anyone on the pub crawl needed it at this point, but (from left) Rekroom staff members George, Eric and Charles were on hand to offer it anyway



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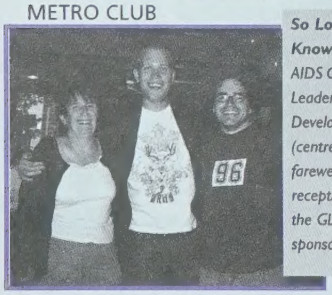
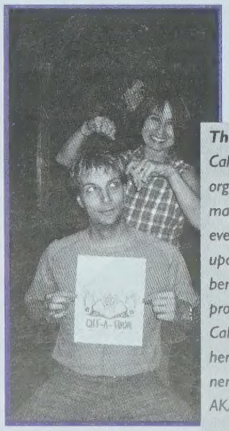
Photos By: Outlooks Staff

Eric Berndt's Farewell Party
METRO CLUB

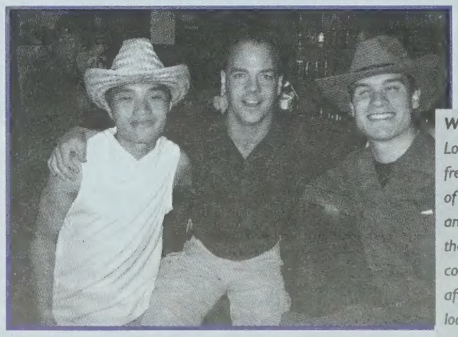


So Long, It's Been Good To Know Ya...
AIDS Calgary's outgoing Team Leader for Communications and Development, Eric Berndt (centre), is pictured here at his farewell party with AIDS Calgary receptionist Coral and Sean, of the GLCSA/AIDS Calgary-sponsored Choices program.

Friendly Farewell
On hand to give Eric (centre left) a big send-off were (from left) Kevin, Lesley and past AIDS Calgary Executive Director Kevin Midbo.



The Kindest Cut
Calgary Cut-a-thon organizer Linda Houston made good use of the event to promote her upcoming event, which benefits the lunch program at AIDS Calgary. She's pictured here with a somewhat nervous DJ Mystare, AKA "the other" Eric.



We're Not Crawling Yet...
Looking remarkably fresh—especially after a week of Stampede—Victor, Grant and C. J. were ready to paint the town red... or whichever colour might strike their fancy after a few stops on the liquor loop.

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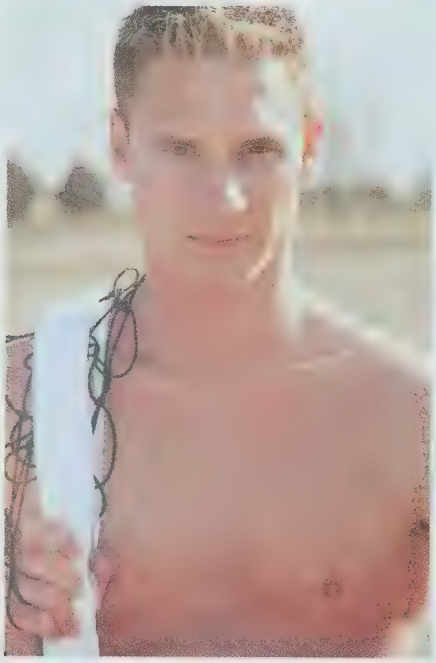
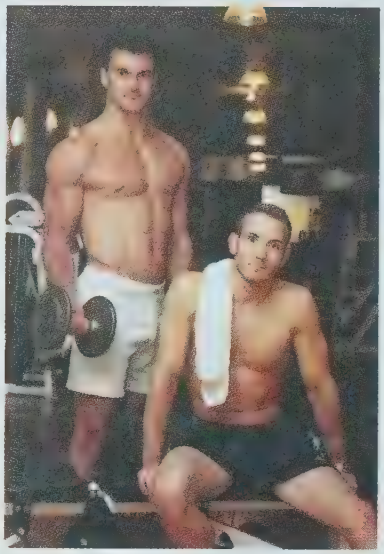
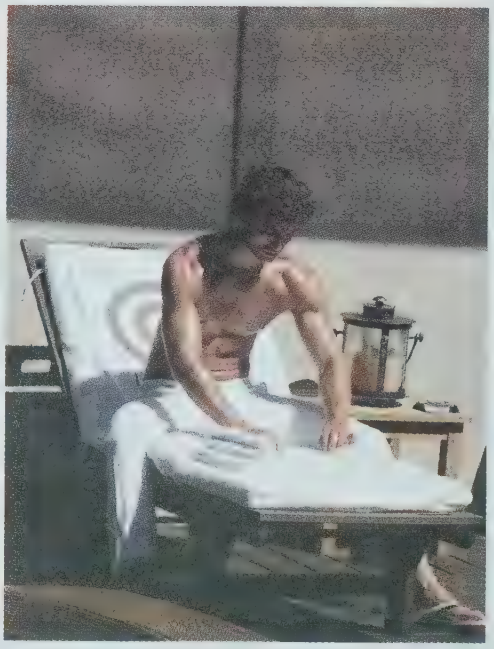
FOCUS

Brian Lawrence is part artist, part technology guy; the shift to the digital age has allowed him to combine his passion for photography with a keen interest in, and knowledge of, technology. Specializing in portrait work, modelling portfolios, event, ad and magazine photography, Brian enjoys capturing the power of people and their expressions. He finds that he truly enjoys the flexibility of the new digital medium, which seems to have helped spur that creative gene in him.







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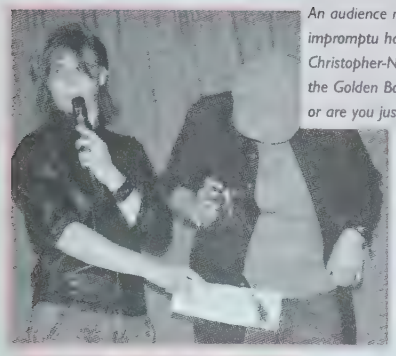
Drag King Burlesque
CLUB DESIRE

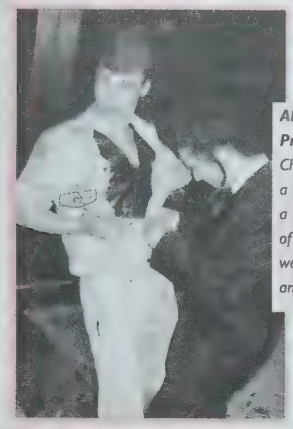


What Kind Of Hair Are You Talkin' About?!
An audience member gets an impromptu hair consultation from Christopher-Noel (left). Is that the Golden Boy on that envelope or are you just glad to see me?

Planning an event in Winnipeg? Contact Brent at (204) 789-9215 and he'll see about covering it in Out & About. All Photos By: Brent Y.

Divas & Legends
GIO'S

Smack Down
It looks like Whitney Houston's seen better days in this parody by Venetia Blinds. Don't worry, Hon—we will always love you-ooo-oooo.



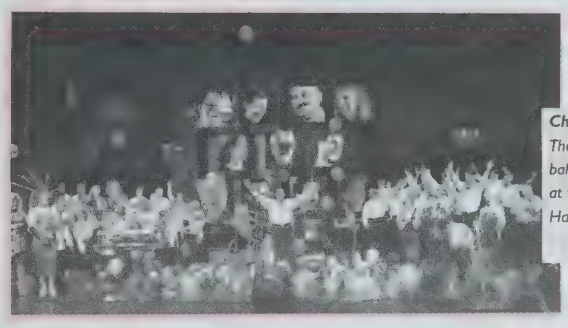
Always Be Prepared...
Christopher-Noel gets a helping hand from a friend—what kind of a merit badge were they going for, anyway?

Well, Cover Me In Honey And Throw Me To The Lesbians...
Carlos Las Vegas "sweetens the pot" with a few squirts of liquid gold, applied liberally

She's Tutu Much!
The lovely Tatiana White glides across the stage as prima ballerina Evelyn Hart... only bigger!

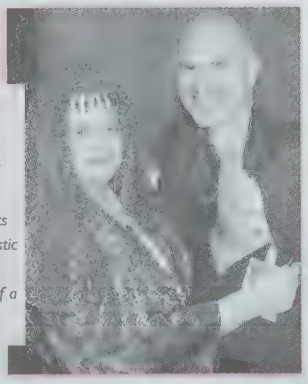
Please, Folks—No Bathroom Humour...
Patrick Michael lays into George Michael's song Freedom. Let's hope the impersonation ends there!

RHP's "Be Fabulous" Concert
MANITOBA THEATRE CENTRE

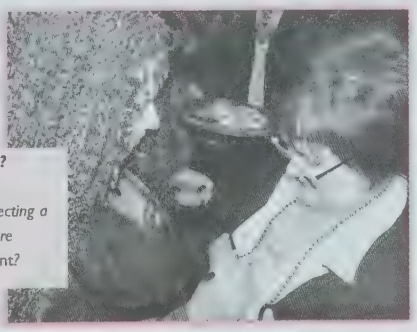


Cheers For Queers
The air was filled with balloons and much applause at the close of the Rainbow Harmony Project's big show.

A Bit Of Sparkling Personality With Your Bubbly?
Raymond and John greeted guests at the post-performance champagne reception with charm and wit. And they hadn't even opened a bottle yet!



Now That We've Got Your Attention...
Kim, lead vocalist of special guest group the Wyrd Sisters, gets cosey with RHP Artistic Director Vic Hooper. Bet she feels a bit of a tit, huh?



What If I Make A Boob-Boo?
Kim takes a moment to sign an autograph for a fan. Are we detecting a trend with body parts here? More importantly, is that ink permanent?

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Finishing what's started...

By David Crosson

As Neil Sedaka once so famously warbled, "Breaking up is hard to do". Imagine, then, that this hardship is compounded by the fact that you *can't* break up—at least not legally—because no blueprint for your type of relationship exists. Such was the case for a B.C. couple known only as J.S. and C.F., their identities now concealed by a publication ban. The two were married in the Vancouver Island town of Parksville back in July of 2003, just ten days after same-sex marriages were made legal in that province. After ten months of married life (the pair had been together for a year prior to tying the knot) it became clear that things weren't going to work out, and J.S. sought a divorce. Much to her surprise, she was advised that same-sex divorce was not permitted under existing laws, even in one of the most liberal provinces in Canada.

"When the lawyer said 'I have some bad news for you: you can't get divorced', I just laughed," J.S. recalls. "I thought: What's the punchline?"

At issue was the fact that marriage was a federal matter—obviously with some provincial exceptions when it came to same-sex unions at the time—but those pertaining to dissolution of same had not yet been changed either federally *or* provincially. And, according to the Divorce Act, a marriage in that regard was only recognized as involving "a man and a woman".

"The weird thing was," J.S. says, "that we were completely allowed to get married in B.C.—that had been made law. But when it came to undoing that the legal issues hadn't been addressed on the other end. You'd think they would have adjusted both things at once, but that wasn't the case."

Interestingly, theirs was not going to be the first same-sex divorce in Canada: an Ontario couple had successfully done so in September of 2004, but there was no court challenge to their proceedings.

The dissolution of J.S.'s own marriage was another matter altogether, one that was going to require a lengthy and expensive challenge to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. And so, with the assistance of lawyers Bonnie McLaughlin and Elisabeth Strain, J.S. waded into the fray, the three taking on a case that would set into motion a judicial chain of events that could potentially make history in this country.

"It was pretty emotional, pretty stressful," J.S. admits. "I had the added stress of this challenge and the possibility that maybe this might not happen; that we might not be able to get divorced after all."

At the core of the case was an argument prepared by McLaughlin, which stated that the Divorce Act in Canada violated the Charter of Rights and Freedoms with its wording of "man and woman". The suggested amendment, based in part on the same-sex divorce case in Ontario, was to change the gender-specific terminology to "persons".

Even though the proposal made perfect sense, particularly in a province that already allowed same-sex marriage, J.S. still had some misgivings. "With everything happening in the government at the time—MPs walking out and everything—I was really expecting [the judge] to say, 'Oh, I'm sorry but I'm going to have to hold off on deciding if you can divorce or not until something happens in Parliament and the same-sex bill passes, *if* it passes. You'll just have to be separated for now'."

Indeed, the issues raised by this case were twofold: first, same-sex marriage was still an extremely divisive issue and Bill C-38 had not yet made its way through Parliament; second, there were rumblings in the community that J.S.'s case would make gay marriage look bad on the PR front, and gave credence to the notion that same-sex unions were more unstable than their straight counterparts.

J.S. admits she was aware of the potential for negative publicity but also acknowledges the necessity for her to proceed with the challenge. "People were glad that it was going to happen and knew that we needed it to happen, but at the same time they were quite concerned about us getting a divorce before the whole same-sex marriage thing had even been decided in Parliament," she says. "However, a lot of marriages don't even last a year, so we were really no different than straight people. The fact that this was a same-sex marriage [being dissolved] just made it that much more noticeable."

People, especially those in the media, really did take notice when, in the middle of June 2005, Justice Laura Gerow struck down the "man and woman" definition as unconstitutional, replacing it with the term "persons".

For J.S. personally, Gerow's ruling was a victory not just for her but for gays and lesbians across the country. "It was just incredible to see her pick up the law book, open it and take her pen and scratch out 'man and woman' and write in the new definition," she recalls. "Being there and being a part of history was pretty amazing, even though it was still something like a divorce."

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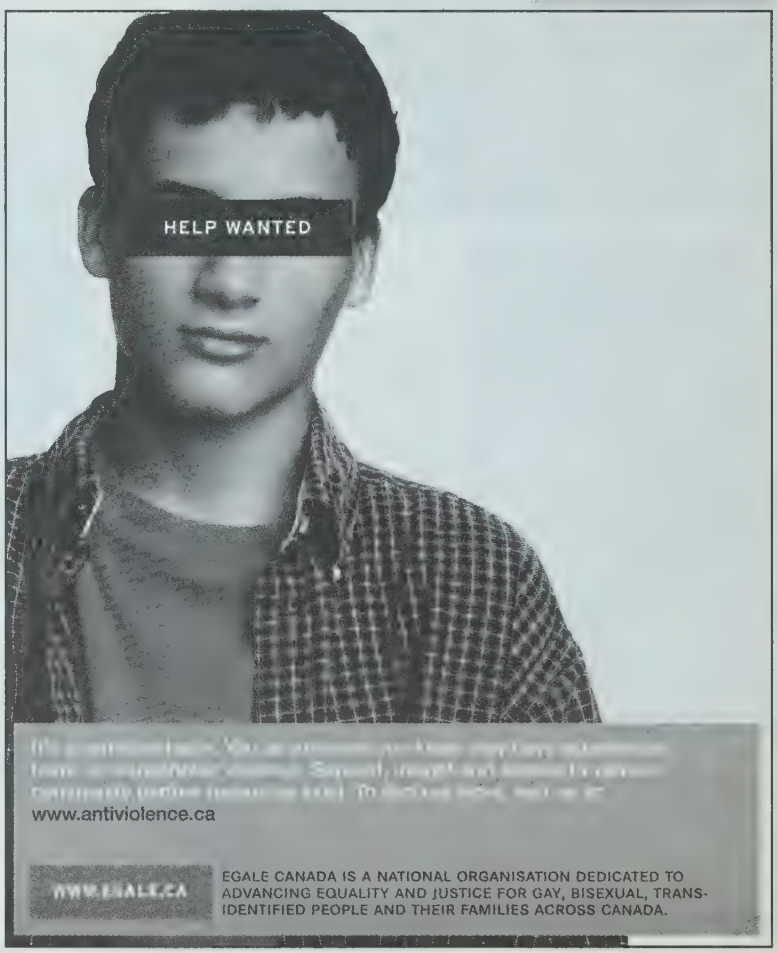

from previous

More amazing still were the circumstances that brought Justice Gerow to the bench in the first place. According to J.S., the judge originally set to preside over the case was rushed to the hospital on her way to court. With the lawyer representing the Attorney General of Canada on her way, and all the other key players in place, something had to be done quickly. In order to make it all happen according to schedule, Judge Gerow was flown into Nanaimo, where the case is being heard, and wound up staying overnight to consider the evidence and arguments presented to her.

Clearly, for gays and lesbians throughout Canada, the maneuvering was worth the effort. With her ruling, Justice Gerow set a legal precedent with the J.S. case, one that the lawyer representing the Attorney General was in agreement with. And, although the decision did not automatically establish new guidelines on a federal level, it will pave the way for such cases in other provinces and territories.

"This was just for B.C., but because it happened in Ontario and B.C. [with the same outcome], it sort of sets the stage for everyone else in the country," J.S. says. "This will be cited as a precedent case for other gay couples who want to get divorced, especially since the Attorney General sent their lawyer and their lawyer was in agreement."

Despite an unfortunate first-time encounter with the institution of marriage, J.S. says the experience hasn't soured her outlook. "I can't rule out marriage completely—who knows what the future will hold?" she says. "I guess we were just so excited that we were able to get married, because it was so new, that we rushed into it."

Given the excitement surrounding the recent Canada-wide ruling, it's quite likely that others will rush into matrimony without first considering the seriousness of the commitment. On this subject, J.S. is reluctant with her advice, although she obviously speaks from experience. "I can't really speak for anyone else but I'd definitely say spend a lot of time together before you get married. And, if you *are* having trouble, I'd suggest counselling to start with—try to work things out as best you can. But, if you've tried everything to make it work and a just doesn't, then at least you know you have the option of dissolving the marriage."

That this option even exists is due in large part to the efforts of J.S. and her lawyers. Though the final bill for her Charter challenge has not yet been tallied, J.S. says she knows this exercise has been a costly one, an issue made even more difficult by the fact that she is currently on disability. If you would like to contribute to help offset some of the costs of his groundbreaking ruling, you may contact lawyer Elisabeth Strain (elisabeth.strain@nanaimo-familylaw.com) to inquire after the J.S. Divorce Case legal fund. If you prefer to do so by post, her mailing address is:

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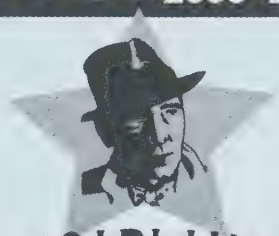

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fYrefly's leadership legacy

By Marjorie Wonham

"Elephant!" said Lynn Sutankayo, whirling around to point at three members of the circle, who had three seconds to jump up and assemble an elephant together. "Giraffe!" she said, pointing at me. The person on my left scrambled onto a chair while the one on my right crouched to become a body. This sort of giggle-inducing silliness is Sutankayo's specialty, as demonstrated while coaching twelve of us into a functioning team. Her motivation? We were among the twenty or so adult and youth facilitators for Camp fYrefly, Canada's largest LGBTTQA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirited, queer, questioning and allied) youth leadership camp.

Hosted in Edmonton—which is, yes, still in Ralph Klein's "we don't need no stinkin' gay marriage" Alberta—the second annual Camp fYrefly drew nearly fifty youth from across Canada for four action-packed days at the Bennett Centre, an environmental education facility in the city's river valley park system.

"The most important aspect of Camp fYrefly," says returning youth leader Robbie Medeiros, "is that being queer is a non-issue. Imagine how many times a day the fact that you're different comes up.... You're in a space where it's a given that you're different, and that doesn't matter." Echoes Kaitlyn Hatch, a returning youth leader from Calgary, "Camp fYrefly gives youth a sense of freedom because they don't have to fret or worry about coming out, they can just be themselves..."

Sutankayo, the camp's education coordinator, explains that the fYrefly metaphor reflects the notion that every youth shines with the potential for leadership. The goal for the camp is to develop that potential with further skills and networks, allowing a youth to shine even brighter, both here and back at home. Sutankayo and Kristy Harcourt, the project's coordinator, are nothing if not suited for this mission. As experienced educators, artists, activists and community leaders, they work together to help run the camp's umbrella program, Out Is In, a free arts-based program for Edmonton's LGBTTQ, questioning and allied youth. Camp fYrefly, which shares the same goals and philosophy of developing youth leadership skills through creativity, is a natural outgrowth.

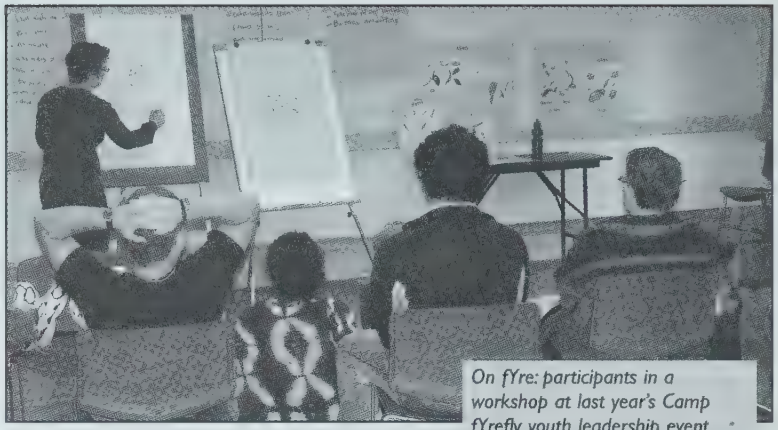
For this year's camp, the Out Is In project team assembled a team of artists, dramatists, and community and youth leaders with an impressive diversity of experience. The camp's opening ceremony, led by three aboriginal community leaders, featured a two-spirit talking circle and workshop. Focusing on aboriginal teachings of the interconnectedness of nature and spirituality, the leaders emphasized how the laws of nature can also underlie a respectful and caring community. As part of that opening ceremony, the aboriginal leaders also called forth a two-spirited Cree spirit to watch over the youth during the camp. Beginning from this grounded sense of place and respect, the four-day program of workshops and activities was designed to build youth leadership capacity, skills and self-esteem.

Luckily, the workshops were hardly what you'd expect to find in school (this *is* summer, after all). With a focus on song, dance, drama, music, art, writing, conversation and games, planned sessions included a youth-led workshop on building and maintaining a school-based GSA (gay-straight student alliance), a two-part workshop by Planned Parenthood on how to develop and present youth-led educational talks on HIV/AIDS, and a workshop in which the youth presentation team OutSpeakz (also a project of Out Is In) offered their creative tools for responding to oppressive "fag-talk" (as in "that's so gay") at school and in the community.

In between structured activities was time designated for reflection, socializing, outdoor recreation and spontaneity. Hatch remembers from a previous camp, being at "a sharing circle out in a field this one day and someone found a ladybug. They were all over the place and soon we were passing ladybugs around this circle like little pieces of luck. Everyone was free to speak their mind and it was an experience you couldn't plan—or duplicate. It was so amazing to feel that vibe and all that connectedness."

In a similar vein, Medeiros recalls "the random jam session that happened in the cafeteria during one of the meals. Someone started a rhythm, which was picked up by multiple campers and turned into a jam session using cutlery, and clapping and humming and... just the synergy among people who started off as strangers was intense."

Although some of the workshops emphasize healthy, sex-positive relationships, Camp fYrefly is no gay Club Med. In addition to a no drugs and alcohol policy, there is a very clear policy to discourage sexual activity and even the formation of best-friend pairs and cliques. This, says Harcourt, maintains the pressure-free, inclusive and respectful atmosphere of the camp. Indeed, one of Harcourt's greatest goals is ensuring that Camp fYrefly is accessible to all youth. This includes physical considerations, as well as any financial, mental, emotional, or social barriers to comfort and participation. In particular, this means the camp is wheelchair-friendly, has ASL interpreters for the hearing-impaired youth, accommodates a wide range of food allergies and preferences, and has volunteer chartered psychologist present to help out. It also means the adult and youth leaders are prepped with strategies and tools for emphasizing inclusion over division.



On fYre: participants in a workshop at last year's Camp fYrefly youth leadership event

Inclusion is certainly no problem for the camp's youth leaders, who seem fabulously talented and enthusiastic. Nancy Price and Jay Bodnariuk, both well-spoken, musical, bisexual twenty-somethings, are active participants in Out Is In, OutSpeakz, and Edmonton's LGBTQ youth group, Youth Understanding Youth. Having performed their own work during Edmonton's Pride Week in June, both performd and helped lead workshops at Camp fYrefly. The pre-camp leadership program, says Price, focused on conflict resolution and on learning to be "a leader from within, not from above."

Other youth leaders, like nineteen-year-olds Daniel Benn and Tam Gorzalka and eighteen-year old Q.C. Gu, participated in Camp fYrefly for the first time. Gu and Benn both attended summer camp as kids, but Gorzalka never found one—until fYrefly—that sounded appealing. She says one of the greatest challenges of the pre-camp leadership training was planning for the age-range of the participants. It's hard, she allows, to remember what it was like to be fourteen.

"The greatest challenge in running Camp fYrefly is money," says Sutankayo. Funding for the camp's coordinating program, Out Is In, is provided by a community mobilization grant from Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada. However, Camp fYrefly itself receives limited funding and relies upon a small army of adult facilitators and youth leaders, which helps keep the cost to each youth at a nominal $25. This secures their spot but is only a small fraction of the per capita operating cost. Most of the camp's operating budget comes from individual and small-organization sponsors, through the tax-deductible "Send a Queer Kid to Camp" program. A common plea repeated by organizers and youth alike is to give a queer kid the chance you never had.

Does Camp fYrefly make a difference? Feedback from participants is overwhelmingly positive. Many of the youth expressed appreciation for the inspiring music and dance, as well as the almost overwhelming emotion that emerged from some sessions. Others commented on the creature comforts of great food, co-ed dorms and gender-free bathrooms. One particular suggestion from last year was to improve the inclusion of trans-identified youth; this year, at least one trans-identified adult volunteer was in attendance. Indeed, it's a sign of the overall success of the first year that almost half the youth returned for a second year, several of them as camp leaders. Other participants from last year are now working on their own Calgary-based leadership program, and one even launched her own yoga-based fundraising project for this year's Camp fYrefly.

To help sponsor a youth to attend Camp fYrefly, please contact Kristopher Wells by e-mail at: kwells@ualberta.ca or call him at (780) 492-0772. All donations are eligible to receive a charitable tax receipt. ▼

Marjorie Wonham is an adult facilitator with Youth Understanding Youth, Edmonton's LGBTQ and allied youth group, and is volunteering at Camp fYrefly for the first time this summer.

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The economics of equality

By Peter Carlyle-Gordge

The steady, onward march of gay rights in Canada and the recognition that same-sexual equality is here to stay, has had important economic implications.

In the past, corporations and companies dared not go where angels feared to tread. Finding financial sponsors for Gay Pride parades and gay events was about as easy as trying to persuade Stephen Harper to step out in high heels and a boa. Companies feared a backlash for visibly supporting GLBT events.

Now all that is changing. Savvy sellers of goods and services realize that hostility to the GLBT community is akin to slashing off your nose to spite your face. It is bad business.

The Toronto Gay Pride parade, attracting over a million onlookers, is a perfect place to do some advertising and marketing. The pink dollar is powerful and so is the blue dollar of those who support pink causes. Corporations ignore both at their peril. Smaller centres still have some trouble attracting corporate sponsorship but that is slowly changing.

Being outwardly homophobic can be corporate suicide and pro-gay shareholders can hold boards to account. Human Rights organizations can also rein in homophobic businesses, fining them and providing plenty of negative publicity. That happened in Winnipeg when a local printer refused to print *Swerve*, the GLBT magazine, because the printer admitted he was biased against gays.

Recently, Winnipeg's Rainbow Resource Centre—which now gets funding help from The Winnipeg Foundation, the Jewish Foundation and the United Way—asked how it could access monies in the Thomas Sill Foundation, a conservative charitable trust. Its executive director told them they had no chance once he realized they were a GLBT organization, but quickly changed his tune when warned that such outright hostility might well be of interest to the Human Rights Commission.

The Sill representative quickly arranged a meeting with the resource centre and said they might be able to access their goods-in-kind program. It doesn't provide cash, but does offer office furniture, computers and so on. Eventually, this foot in the door may indeed lead to some tangible funding but it may take a few years.

In terms of GLBT civil rights, the United States clearly lags behind Canada, and the religious right has done its best to punish corporations that show signs of supporting GLBT causes. One of the most publicized recent cases occurred when Microsoft supported a move in Washington State to approve a gay civil rights bill, which had won support in the House. But Ken Hutcherson, a Seattle evangelist, threatened a national boycott of Microsoft products if the firm didn't recant.

To its eternal shame and much damaging publicity, Microsoft cravenly caved in to this blatant blackmail and withdrew its support. The measure failed to get Senate approval by one vote, but Microsoft's stance brought a huge backlash and the company was forced to change its mind again, vowing to support such a measure in future.

Now Oregon-based Nike has learned from Microsoft's mistake and has announced its unwavering support for two GLBT civil rights bills that will create civil unions and anti-discrimination laws in that state . Nike is getting tons of positive publicity from its decision.

Nike representative Wes Coleman is capitalizing to the hilt. "One of the Nike maxims is 'Do the Right Thing'," he says. "This asks our employees not to look for things that make us different but to look for things that make us better. Many of our employees' lives will be better because of passage of these bills."

The religious right is noted for bullying tactics. The American Family Association waged an eight-year boycott of Disney products and theme parks after attacking it for supporting gay issues. Southern Baptists also supported this boycott, accusing Disney of violating "moral righteousness and traditional family values".

Clearly, the campaign had little effect because it has just been called off, though the self-righteous Baptists will continue monitoring Disney. In the last thirty years, the southern Baptists have passed thirteen resolutions against gays and lesbians and they oppose all efforts to teach diversity and anti-homophobia in schools.

On the positive side, corporate sponsorship of gay events has never been stronger in the U.S., despite the venom-spitting religious zealots. In San Francisco, both Volkswagen and Wells Fargo Bank have strongly supported Gay Pride. Companies are choosing to ignore threats from anti-gay groups and advertising agencies are encouraging clients to support gay events as a sound business decision.

Supporters of Pride events now include Anheuser-Busch, Bank of America, Avis Rent-A-Car, Aetna Insurance and Delta Airlines. The latter is sponsoring Pride festivals in New York, Boston, Cincinnati, San Francisco and Atlanta. A Delta spokesperson says the Pride festivals offer a very loyal customer base and it would be crazy not to cater to it.

Other corporate sponsors at Pride events now include Ford Motor co., Absolut Vodka, Washington Mutual Bank, PepsiCo Inc. and the Showtime and Bravo cable networks. Anheuser-Busch finds Pride events perfect for promoting its Bud Light brand.

In Minneapolis, Best Buy is a sponsor of Twin Cities Pride and Coca Cola has been involved with Pride events in Atlanta, its home city. Smaller, local companies are often involved in Pride sponsorship, but in Toronto some major players have come aboard, including Air Canada, Labatt Blue, 7-Eleven, Via Rail, Ikea, MAC, Rogers, Pizza Pizza and the University of Toronto.

With increasing acceptance of gays as part of mainstream society—and gay marriage now legal—the trend to marketing at Pride events will likely increase and the power of extremist bigots to blackmail corporations will decrease. In the U.S. alone it's estimated that today the GLBT population numbers fifteen million, with a combined purchasing power of $610 billion.

Finally, all of this can work in reverse. The GLBT community wields significant economic power and can, if it wishes, withdraw support from companies and suppliers who are clearly homophobic whether publicly or privately. And there is good news from rainy Manchester, England, where I studied economics at the university for four years.

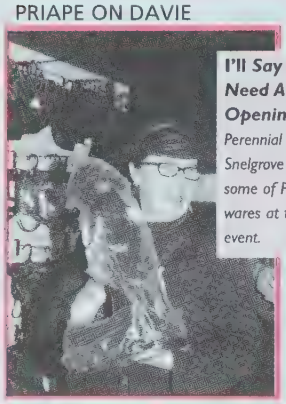
The Coop Bank, headquartered in that city, announced in June that it has ordered a gay-bashing Christian conservative group, Christian Voice, to close its accounts. The bank will no longer do business with the group, which believes gays and women should be banned from working as police officers.

Says bank official Simon Williams: "They are targeting one group in society in a hateful manner…The bank believes in respect for all sectors of society and its approach to Christian Voice is based purely on the issue of diversity and not on the grounds of religion."

Amen to that—and long may Coop Bank prosper. ▼

Peter Carlyle-Gordge is a former Manitoba correspondent for* Maclean's *and* The Financial Post. *He has written for most major magazines and newspapers in Canada as well as broadcasting on the national and international networks of CBC Radio.

Grand Opening
PRIAPE ON DAVIE



I'll Say You'd Need A 'Grand Opening'!
Perennial diva Barb Snelgrove examines some of Priape's wares at the launch event.

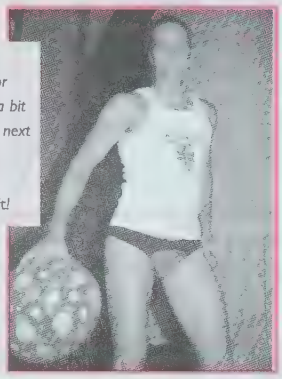
(Chain) Male
Brian hits the "links" in a breezy, if hefty, showstopper of a top. Watch your nips in that thing, Brian!

Show's Over, Folks...
And business is just beginning. Pictured here with the models are Priape owner Bernard and Montréal store manager Sylvain.

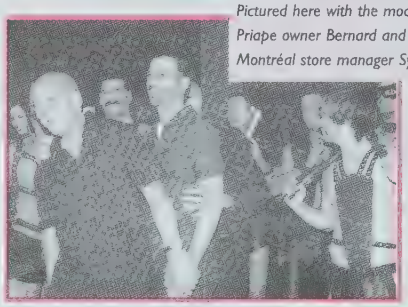
Pride Field Trip
NANAIMO, B.C.

Land Ho's
PumpJack's Pride contingent arrived on the docks ready for action—tasteful, responsible, Pride-oriented action, that is...

Flagging Spirit
Patrick greets the PumpJack crew at the docks in preparation for Nanaimo's Pride festivities.

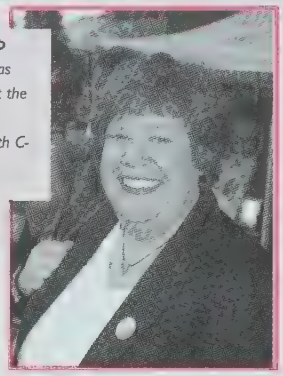


Ball, Anyone?
Ample evidence for trying to get into a bit of aquatic trouble next time you're at the beach. David Hasselhoff he ain't!

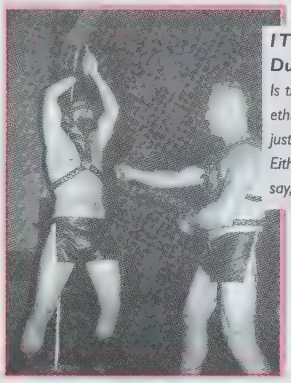


VPS Stonewall
GRANDVIEW PARK

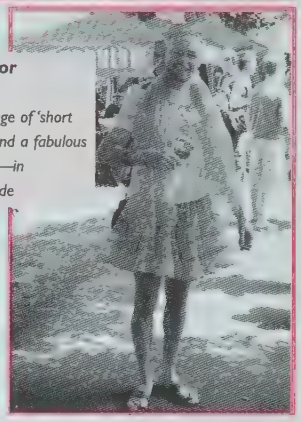
Park. Kings. Lots.
Members of 3$Bill were on hand to celebrate in the park. Talk about hotties!



Libby Lights Up
MP Libby Davies was positively glowing at the event—think it had something to do with C-38 passing?

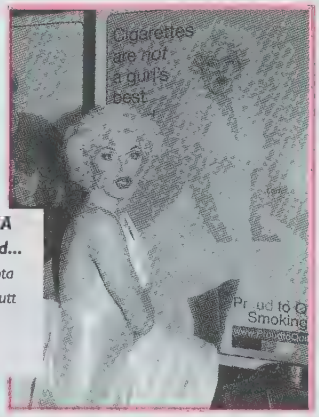


I Thought I Told You To Dust The Racks!
Is that guy flogging a work ethic into an employee or just demonstrating the gear? Either way, as Paris would say, "That's hot".



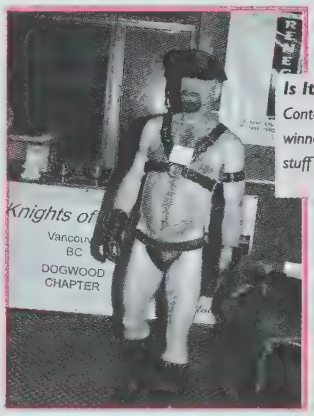
It's Too Hot For Nylons...
Jim takes advantage of 'short skirt weather'—and a fabulous party in the park—in anticipation of Pride

Proud To Quit
Re-Launch
SUGAR DADDIES



Clean Lungs Are A Gurl's Best Friend...
Smoke-free diva Carlota Gurl poses with her butt out poster. Wait, that didn't sound right...

Knights of Malta Bare As You Dare
NUMBERS



Is It Chilly In Here?
Contestant—and eventual winner—Barney struts his stuff for all to see

Why Did I Write The Lyrics For My Number On Here?
Paige Turner seems curiously enraptured by Barney's derriere. Think she'll do U2's I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For?

Buster Cherry's 50th
CELEBRITIES

Dick Head—Er, Hat...
Actualy, it's a tiara, a special gift to Buster from Iris.

Oh, Yeah—Well I'm Gonna Bust You!
Simone helps Buster celebrate year 50 in grand style—grand diva style, actually. That's some set of birthday bumps, Simone...

Planning an event in Vancouver? Contact Barry at (604) 685-1377 and he'll see about covering it in Out & About. Photos By: Barry Piersdorff

DON'T YOU WISH?

Nathan

Photographs by Cap Peters

Even though he enjoys such manly pursuits as tennis, baseball and swimming, Nathan can still outshop any one of the girls from *Sex and the City*.

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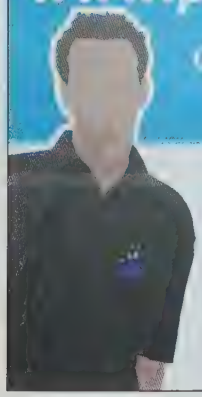

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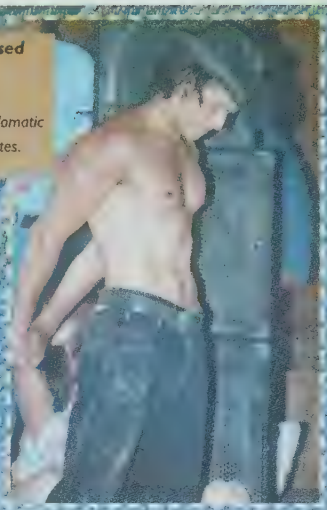
CANADIAN ROCKIES INTERNATIONAL RODEO 2005



Some Beef Crossed The Border...
One good reason for maintaining good diplomatic relations with the States.

How Our West Was Won
Big smiles and broad-brimmed hats, for starters. The DC Cowboys captured in a rare moment of rest.

Divine Daughters
One of the highlights of the CRIR's talent roster was a performance by The Daughters, who hadn't been to play since the 2000 event.

If We Go Fast Enough, Maybe We Could Turn Back Time
The chaps in chaps take a spin around the dancefloor during their Friday night performance.

It's All Fun And Games Until Someone Loses A Contact
Participants braved a muddy infield for some rough rodeo action on Saturday afternoon.

Country Crooner
Vancouver-based Patrick Masse got the crowd started in Friday evening's big line-up of entertainment.

Photos by Mark Bennett unless otherwise noted

I Was Framed
Western artist—and June Outlooks Framed subject—Marc Houde poses with his wares.

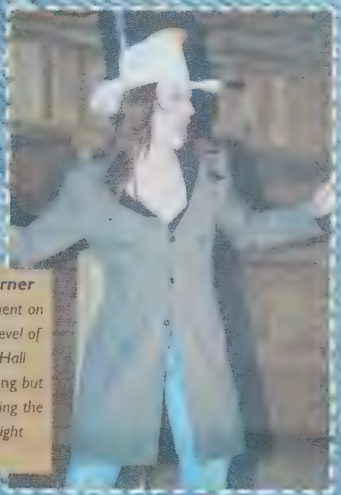
Dapper Gents
Past Focus contributors Arlin (left) and Gordon, done up in their finest for the dance. Doublemint gum, anyone?

Sagebrush Sistas
Former Outlooks "Webutante" writer Darren McInnes (left) with pal David Stewart at the big Saturday night dance.

Ain't That The Calgary Tower?
An impressive working model of, well, something, graced the grounds of Symon's Valley Ranch. Think the Canada Council was involved?

Does This Shade Make My Lips Look Fuller?
An all-important bull fighter takes a rest during the Sunday events

This photo by Barry Piersdorff



Barn Burner
Entertainment on the lower level of Driftwood Hall was anything but a drag during the Saturday night dance.

Night Vision
One of the more over-the-top campsites at CRIR 2005.

RESULTS—CANADIAN ROCKIES INTERNATIONAL RODEO 2005

ALL AROUND—CRIR 2005
Women: Lori W. (ARGRA)
Men: Carl W. (SSRA)

CANADIAN ALL AROUND
Women: Lori A. (ARGRA)
Men: Kevin M. (ARGRA)

BAREBACK BRONC
No winner for 2005

BARREL RACING
Women: Lana C. (ARGRA)
Men: Terry W. (ARGRA)

BREAK-AWAY ROPING
No Winners for 2005

CALF ROPING ON FOOT
Women: Jo-Anne B. (ARGRA)
Men: Kevin M. (ARGRA)

FLAG RACING
Women: Lori A. (ARGRA)
Men: Carl W. (SSRA)

POLE BENDING
Women: Lana C. (ARGRA)
Men: Carl W. (SSRA)

STEER RIDING
Women: No winner for 2005
Men: Bob W. (SSRA)

WILD DRAG RACES
Team 1: Patricia L. (ARGRA); Carl W. (SSRA); Bob W. (SSRA)

BULL RIDING
Women: No winner for 2005
Men: Chuck B. (AGRA)

CHUTE DOGGING
Women: Tammy H. (ARGRA)
David S. (GSGRA)

STEER DECORATING
Team 1: Brian H. (AGRA); Chuck B. (AGRA)

GOAT DRESSING
Team 1: Brian H. (AGRA); Chuck B. (AGRA)

TEAM ROPING
No winner for 2005

ALL AROUND CAMP
Carl W. (SSRA); Bob W. (SSRA)

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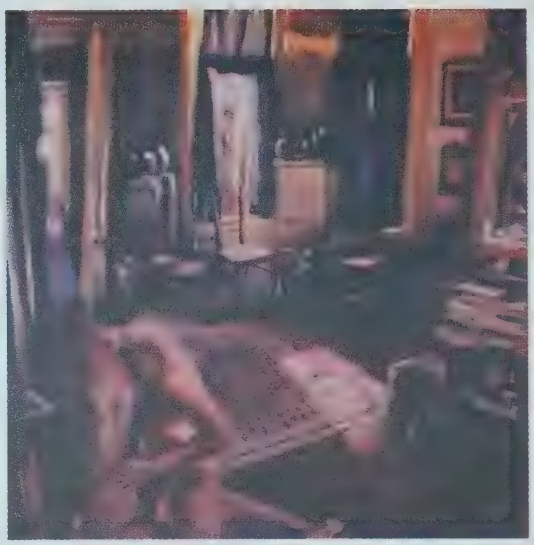
Brad Pasutti is a Victoria-based artist. More of his work can be seen online at: www3.telus.net/pasutti

"Le Orientiste" 2002 (35" x 29") oil on canvas over board



"Voyeur" 1993 (28" x 22") pastel on paper

"Mystere de L'instant" 1998 (19 3/4" x 26") pastel on paper

"Venice" 1999 (30" x 42") pastel on paper

"To Caravaggio" 1999 (30" X 41.5") pastel on paper

"Through the Looking Glass" 1999 (22.5" X 33") pastel on paper

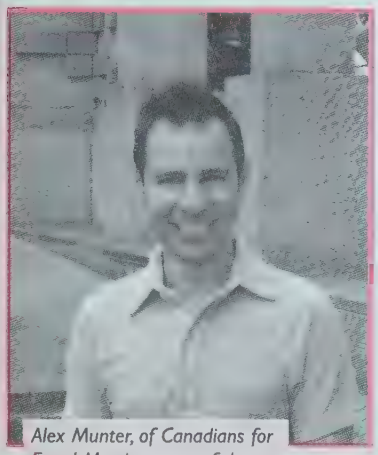
OUTLOOKS is proud to bring you this ongoing showcase of artistic talent in Canada's GLBT community. If you would like your work considered for this feature please submit samples to main@outlooks.ca

A life in politics (to date)

By Dale Smith

Since the organization's inception in September of 2003, the face of Canadians for Equal Marriage in the media has been that of Alex Munter. In the months leading up to the House of Commons votes on Bill C-38, which would extend civil marriage rights to same-sex couples, Munter was tireless in his lobbying, attending every event there was to attend in Ottawa in order to make sure that people were aware of the message.

"That's what my life has always been all about, being an elected official," Munter says. Indeed, Munter served as a city councillor in the Ottawa area from 1991 until 2003. "The fundamental thing about being an elected person is that you need to like people, because it's a people business. I like people, I get energy from others' energy, so obviously it's been an intensive six-plus months in terms of the community, the media, Parliament Hill, the constant engagement of people as we move forward on the bill."



Alex Munter, of Canadians for Equal Marriage, one of the most recognizeable faces associated with the same-sex marriage battle

It was around the time of his retirement from local politics that Munter got involved with the advocacy group. "I've been involved in the LGBT community for a long time. I was one of the Ottawa co-chairs of the Campaign for Equal Families back in 1994, which was a group in support of the same-sex relationship recognition bill by the Bob Rae NDP government at the time," he says. "I was involved in some of the discussions after the court decisions in June of 2003 that legalized same-sex marriage in Ontario and B.C., and there were discussions in the summer following those court decisions. Those discussions were about the idea of forming a coalition that would include the LGBT community but would also include other Canadians who support the Charter of Rights, Canadians who believe in equality, and that's how Canadians for Equal Marriage was born.

"I'd been involved in the executive committee of Canadians for Equal Marriage since that point, September 2003, and the decision was made last Christmas that, since we were moving into the home stretch with the imminent tabling of the bill, it made sense to move the national headquarters of Canadians for Equal Marriage from Toronto—where it had been until then—to Ottawa," he continues. "They needed a national coordinator in Ottawa, and so I took that on."

With a laugh, he says that his goal all along has been to put himself out of business.

For Munter, the issue was always much more than just parties and press conferences. In May, when the collapse of government looked imminent, Munter and CEM were trying to deal with the possible repercussions if an election meant that C-38 died on the Order Paper.

"Obviously, nobody at all could have predicted the series of dominoes [that fell]—including Belinda Stronach and Chuck Cadman—that would lead to the Liberals staying in power," he says. "Looking back on the past six months, the situation never remained stable for more than twenty-four hours. We were up one day and then down the next in terms of our prospects. We did what everybody else in Ottawa was doing—we started election planning. We developed an election strategy, we had materials ready to go and we would have transformed Canadians for Equal Marriage into an election-oriented campaign, to try to elect as equal-marriage-friendly a Parliament as possible. The core team, about four of us in Ottawa, gathered and watched that roll-call vote and saw Chuck Cadman stand up—I've never been quite so pleased to throw out a whole lot of work that I'd done."

And now that it's over with, what's next? Does Canadians for Equal Marriage now just close up shop, and everyone return to their normal lives, or is there still work to be done?

"Canadians for Equal Marriage was an outgrowth of EGALE," Munter points out, referring to Equality for Gays and Lesbians Everywhere, the national GLBT advocacy group. "CEM will fold back into EGALE and the continuing work on marriage—to the extent that there's further work to do, as well as work on other LGBT issues—will go back to EGALE.

"In terms of me, my affiliation and involvement has been with Canadians for Equal Marriage and not EGALE, so I go back to my regular life, which is as a visiting professor at the University of Ottawa, as a media commentator and writer—I write a column for the Ottawa Citizen and I do commentating on local issues for CBC Radio, CBC French Radio, CJOH TV."

Munter also teaches summers at Concordia University in Montréal and has a foundation (the Alex Munter Charitable Foundation) that raises money for social agencies that work to prevent homelessness in Ottawa. He also serves on the boards of various local community organizations in Ottawa.

Even though he has not had much to do with federal politics in some of his others spheres, one has to wonder if this experience given Munter a taste for federal politics.

"I think my involvement has always been at the local level, and I think that the opportunity for greatest impact is generally at the local level," he muses. "That said, I've very much enjoyed working on this issue. For me, it was a reminder of how big and vast and varied a country we live in."

With the marriage fight now over with, even in Alberta, what's next for the GLBT community? Do we have any battles left to fight?

Munter thinks so: "I don't think it's one fight, one issue, I think it's a whole bunch of little issues. Again, it speaks to the impact at the community and provincial level. I think the issue is around access to services. Here in Ottawa, we did a project about four years ago, called the 'LGBT Health and Wellness Study', that showed that fifty percent of people were not out to their physician, for example. I was completely shocked by that finding—Ottawa, Canada's fourth-largest city, yet half of people surveyed were not out to their physicians. I think there are a lot of issues around access to health services, access to social services and full participation in community life. Those, I think, are issues that vary from place to place. Issues like policing, health, social services, education are different in Calgary versus Ottawa versus Labrador City."

He pauses for a moment. "I think that for most of those issues, political mobilization is necessary. With the marriage issue, we saw a combination of political mobilization and legal challenges. I think in the future, much more will need to be about political mobilization at the community grassroots level."

And we can be sure that in Ottawa, Alex Munter will be leading that charge.

Dale Smith is a freelance writer who lives in Ottawa. His work has previously appeared in XY Magazine, and Outlooks' RSVP competition.

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At long last my marriage is equal

By John Coulbourn; reprinted from the June 30th edition of the Toronto Sun with permission of Sun Media Corp.

Some days, the world looks pretty fine—and yesterday was one of them.

I woke up yesterday morning wrapped securely in the knowledge that for the first time in my life, I was legally married, not just in Ontario, but from sea to sea to sea, finally fully at home in a country I love passionately.

Of course, my marriage has been legal in Ontario since it was performed a year and a half ago.

Still, my husband and I have watched with great interest as the rights of gays and lesbians to legally create fully functional families has been recognized by more and more jurisdictions across the nation.

On Tuesday night, thanks to a legitimate vote in the House of Commons, that right was finally accorded to all the citizens of Canada, requiring only a nod from the Senate to make it law.

Of course, we rejoice—and if, in rejoicing in our victory, we seem to be rejoicing in someone else's defeat, forgive us and try to understand that it is so hard for us to put a face on just who or what was defeated.

Certainly, there are thousands of Canadians who feel passionately that traditional marriage should be preserved—and they awoke yesterday morning as free as they have ever been to enter into a traditional marriage.

They may feel that marriage as they know it has been cheapened by extending it to include same-sex unions, but considering what heterosexuals have done to the institution over the years, it seems to me that the value to be found in any marriage today lies in what the principals bring to it, not what the state imposes upon it.

We also know that mere legislation is not going to work miracles, that there will always be people who will refuse to see us as married—or at least not as married as a man and a woman would be.

Now, however, thanks to the passage of Bill C-38, we don't have to worry about what those people think. Instead, we can get on with building our lives together, which is, procreative arguments notwithstanding, the driving force behind most successful marriages, at least in my observation.

And marriage it is and marriage it must remain, for calling it anything else merely marks those who enter into such unions as "different" in a world that has proved conclusively through this debate that differences aren't always something we celebrate.

In my less charitable moments as this argument has raged, I've found myself wondering if the insistence that gay and lesbian marriage be called something other than marriage grows out of a concern that no longer will people be able to identify themselves as part of the exclusive heterosexual club, simply by labeling themselves married.

Time will tell.

I know, nonetheless, that it is hard today for some people to accept the fact that two men or two women can marry, but over time, we'll all get used to it.

Months ago, my reference to my husband prompted an otherwise intelligent colleague to crow: "Does this mean you're the wife?"

Someday, I hope he'll understand that a marriage can embrace two husbands or two wives as easily as it embraces one of each, but if he doesn't, that's now his problem, not mine, for I already know it and my life is the richer for it.

Rest assured, it is something he will never understand if the notion that same-sex marriage can be called something else ever takes wing.

While I may subscribe to Shakespeare's theory that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet, this really is more of a situation of, "If it walks like a duck and it quacks like a duck..."

If gays and lesbians are to be afforded the opportunity to enter into an institution equal to marriage in every way, then let's just call it marriage and get on with it.

After all, the sun came up yesterday morning, just as it did the day before—and I presume that your marriage is as strong today as it was Tuesday, regardless of the gender of your spouse.

I know mine is.

But yesterday was a still fine day indeed, from sea to sea to sea. ▼

John Coulbourn is a native Albertan who lived for many years in Calgary. He now makes his home in Toronto, where he covers performing arts for the Toronto Sun.

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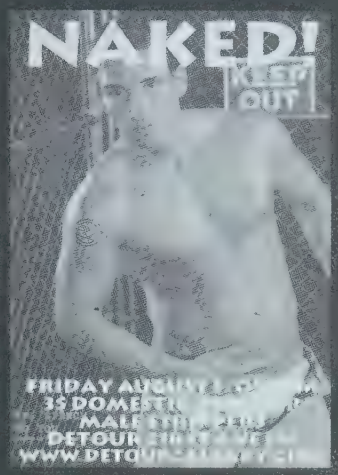

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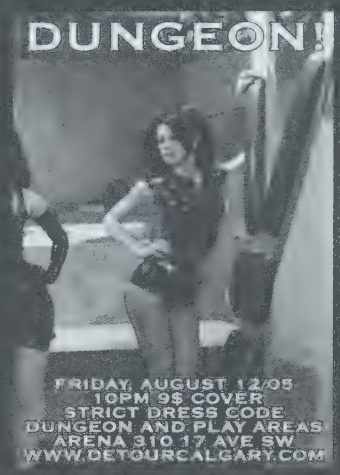

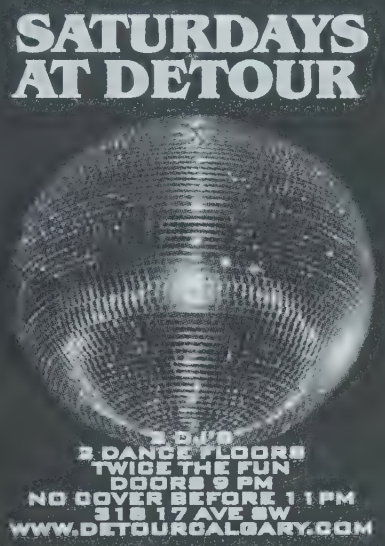

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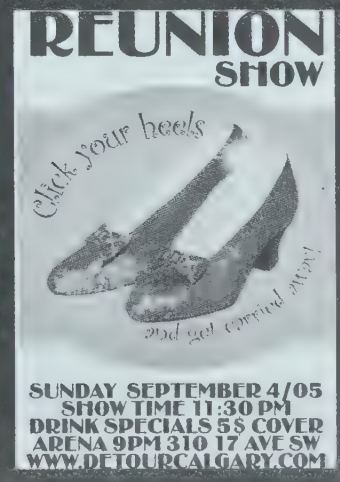

Framed for the future

By Dale Smith

In 1998, the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives were on the eve of their twenty-fifth anniversary and wanted to do something a little special. Edward Tompkins, then-president of the CLGA Archives, had experience as an archivist in the photographic collection of the National Archives in Ottawa. He suggested that the CLGA create a national portrait collection as the main feature of their twenty-fifth anniversary, an on-going project to which they would add over the years. The first twenty-five portraits were commissioned and the Archives have steadily added to that number since.

Honouree kd lang, as captured by Maurice Vellekoop

This year the collection adds five new portraits to the ranks, bringing the total number to sixty-nine. The new pieces will be unveiled at the Toronto City Hall Rotunda at a ceremony held on Sunday, August 21, at 2 p.m. The entire National Portrait Collection will remain on exhibition at City Hall for the following week, open to the public from August 21 through to August 27.

Among this year's honourees are: lesbian poet and author C M Donald; influential activist John Duggan; John Alan Lee, the first gay professional to come out on TV; Toronto community organizer and sex educator Bev Lepischak; and trans activist Kyle Scanlon.

Harold Averill is a member of the operations committee of the Archives as well as a member of the National Portrait Committee and has been active with the CLGA for over twenty-seven years. According to him, the purpose of the portrait collection is to "bring the world's attention to those in our community who have made a significant contribution, and to demonstrate that there are very competent artists who often aren't all that recognized, and we would have a collection that would celebrate them."

Honouree Carole Pope, as captured by George Whiteside

Four artists this year will be creating the five portraits. Given the collection's tendency to prefer photograph over other media, it is expected that the trend will continue this year as well.

"Norman Hatton is a photographer who's well known in the community," Averill says. "He's done the portrait of John Alan Lee." Gail Kenney is on double-duty this year, doing the portraits of both C M Donald and Bev Lepischak, after one artist was forced to back out of the project. "Laura Spalding [doing Kyle Scanlon's portrait] has done another portrait for us, and it was a photograph."

"By and large we've been very pleased with the artists because all we can offer them is a small honorarium and a tax receipt, so it's not like they are going to make a great deal of money from this," Averill continues. "For someone like Evergon, who is doing the portrait of John Duggan, his pieces of art command thousands and thousands of dollars. He's done several others for us over the years, and they're wonderful compositions."

The process of selecting just who gets inducted is primarily left up to the community itself. "We invite people to nominate individuals," Averill says. "We make the selection from the nominees that we receive each year. As a part of that list, we try to ensure that there's a wide variety of people from various parts of the country, that we have some gay people, some lesbians, and this year for instance, one of the inductees is a transgendered person. The selection is basically based on who is nominated by individuals, and we invite people from all across Canada to submit nominations."

Sometimes, though, there are exceptions. "Occasionally we feel that there are people that we really want to honour now rather than later, because there may be health problems or other reasons that we feel they may not be around to reap the benefits, so we will ensure that they are included at a particular time," Averill says.

Honouree Svend Robinson, as captured by Maurice Vellekoop

While it varies from year-to-year, Averill guesses that there are usually about twenty nominations per year, though not necessarily different people with every nomination.

"What we're really hoping is that we will get more nominations in the future," he says. "We are particularly interested in nominees from outside the Southern Ontario region, because the collection as it currently stands is a bit skewed towards central Canada. Most of us on the committee were not born in Toronto and would like to see the country as a whole better represented than it is. We've got people from pretty much every province except New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, and we don't have anyone from the Territories."

Once the nominations have been gone through, and the inductees chosen, it then becomes up to the inductees to choose the artist that they feel can best represent them, and in what particular medium. "That is negotiated between the artist and the inductee, and the committee, because we go with whom the inductee would like to do the portrait," Averill says. "If the inductee has a particular choice then we try to make sure that that happens, and it usually does.

He says that, in 2003, a number of non-photographic works—everything from graphite on paper to pencil crayon on paper to acrylic–were done for the collection. The Archive also accepts three-dimensional images within reason (they can't be too large) but Averill says they haven't really had any presented yet.

While the entire collection will be seen at Toronto's City Hall the week following the unveiling, its permanent home is with the Archives.

"It is a travelling collection," Averill says. "If centres across the country are willing to have it, and we can work out the logistics of sending it out—which is a fair amount of work, but well worth the while—it does travel."

Although it hasn't travelled in a while, the collection has made its way across the country, including western Canada. "It was in Saskatoon in 2000, and that was quite an event because it was held in the midst of a blizzard in January," Averill recalls. "Something like 300 people turned up for it—which shows something of the prairie spirit; they will turn out for things they are interested in. It was a roaring success. As a part of that trip the show was also presented in Regina. We tried to get it to Winnipeg, but couldn't make the logistics [work]."

For more information on the Archives and the National Portrait Collection, to view the existing portraits or to learn about the nomination process, visit **www.clga.ca**. ▼

Dale Smith is a freelance writer who lives in Ottawa. His work has previously appeared in XY Magazine, and Outlooks' RSVP competition.

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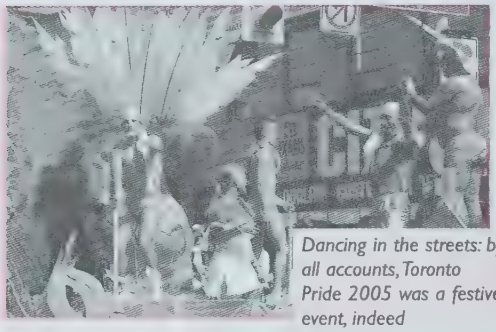
Summer reflections

By Shaun Proulx

This is the year the bitch came back. If you were in Toronto for Pride number twenty-five you know it was one of the best in recent memory, certainly compared to the muted celebrations of the years SARS affected. When it takes you fifteen minutes to travel a block-and-a-half, you know you're stuck in the midst of the real thing.

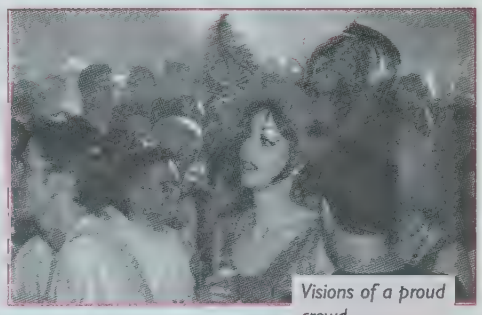


Dancing in the streets: by all accounts, Toronto Pride 2005 was a festive event, indeed

The new Chief of Police Bill Blair's invite-only Pride reception at headquarters early in the week put his predecessor Julian Fantino's past efforts to shame, and all it took was believable sentiment and sincerity regarding improving the relationship between his force and the community. Blair then joined the masses marching in Sunday's Parade, as did Mayor David Miller, who, well into his term as city boss man, still seems to have the hearts of the homos around here.

Despite a few glitches (not that you noticed if your MDMA had kicked in), the big Pride parties were doozies. Crowds, ranging from decent to shoulder-to-shoulder, hit both the weekend offerings from Prism Weekend and Rise camps, with the Pride Day head-to-head parties (Revival starring Peter Rauhoffer versus Rise starring Manny Lehman) each apparently a success. And that puts an end to all that for a while.

Toronto is a sun-baby's wet dream as we continue to be drenched in one sexy sultry summer day after another. (Of course the worst of fags are whining it's too hot out; catch the same ones complaining it's too cold here in mere months.) Keep your eyes peeled for some interesting tan lines in the city after Sunday, August 21 when the Church Street Fetish Fair takes over the greater Church-Wellesley area, with portions of the street closed down for some car-free corner-to-corner frisky fun.



Visions of a proud crowd

Boy, it hasn't been pleasant watching charmless chain stores the likes of American Apparel lay claim to Church Street. Making matters worse, it sadly appears that we've lost The Barn, a gay institution in Toronto if there ever was one. Eons ago, when I was a naïve doe-eyed youth, that three-floor firetrap packed solid with leather-clad older men used to intimidate the s*** out of me and I loved it. And those back rooms! Skin on skin, the smell of poppers, sweat, and the sounds of sucking and f****ing to a disco beat. (So they say.) That sort of Saturday debauchery is a distant memory, but somehow The Barn's doors slamming shut for good punctuates it.

And that's not all. With hangouts Cube, Slack Alice and Looking Glass long closed, options are even fewer when you're parched, and for now you can cross Babylon off the list, too. Owner Amir Ebrahimnia was arrested on Saturday of Pride Weekend and claims in a widely-circulated e-mail that Toronto police confronted him with accusations of an over-crowded bar (which he denies) and verbally and physically harassed him and his parents, who worked there. By the time you read this, Ebrahimnia will have made his first court appearance and says he won't reopen the bar. Of course police are remaining mum, but meanwhile, what was that Chief Blair was saying just a few days earlier? ▼

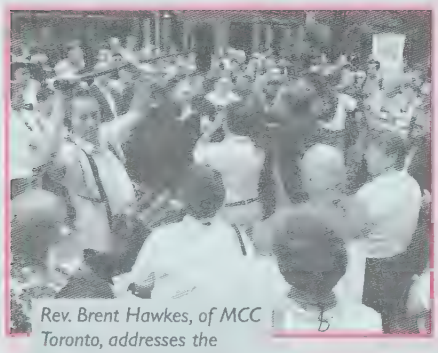
Photos in this story courtesy of www.gayguidetoronto.com

Shaun Proulx is a Toronto writer who contributes to The Globe And Mail, is Publisher and Editor of GayGuideToronto.com and is a feature contributor and columnist (Cocktail Confessions) with Xtra.

IN THE NEWS

MCC convenes in Cowtown

By Outlooks Staff

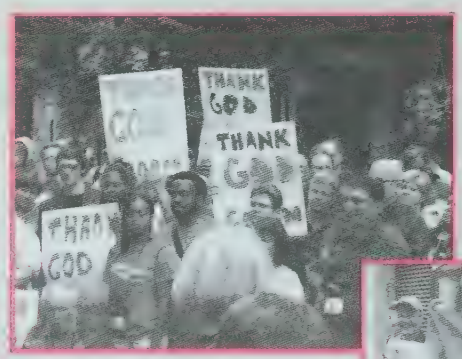


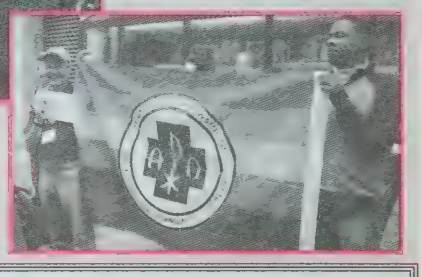
Rev. Brent Hawkes, of MCC Toronto, addresses the crowd at the Friday rally

For several days at the end of July, Calgary got a whole lot holier as approximately 2,000 gay Christians flocked to the city for the Metropolitan Community Church World Jubilee and General Conference. Visitors from more than twenty-three countries gathered for a series of lectures, workshops, worship services and a rally in support of the recent same-sex marriage ruling in Parliament.

This event marked both a beginning and an end for the 43,000-member Christian church that ministers primarily to members of the GLBT community. On July 21st, after thirty-seven years of service, MCC Founder and Moderator Rev. Troy Perry delivered his farewell retirement speech to a capacity crowd gathered at the Epcor Centre for the Performing Arts. Three days later, delegates convened to elect a new leader to take Perry's place, although details on his successor's identity were unavailable as of press time.

To the delight of organizers, the conference was so successful that a third host hotel, the Calgary Marriott, had to be added to the official accommodation roster, as the Hyatt Regency and Fairmont Palliser had already reached full capacity well in advance of the event's start date. As well, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security granted MCC's request for a waiver that would allow HIV-positive international visiotors entering or travelling through the States to attend the conference. This was a particularly important factor in the success of the event, and given the current political climate in America, a surprisingly liberal move for the administration. The conference attracted a good deal of media coverage and the reception delegates received in Calgary was overwhelmingly positive. For more information on the MCC, visit their official site at: www.mcc.org. ▼





(Clockwise) Signs of support in Calgary; an informative coaster from the conference; a banner occasion for gay Christians everywhere

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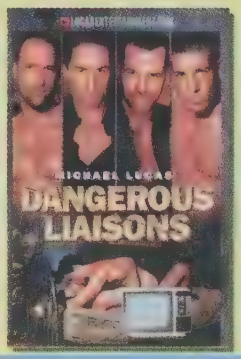

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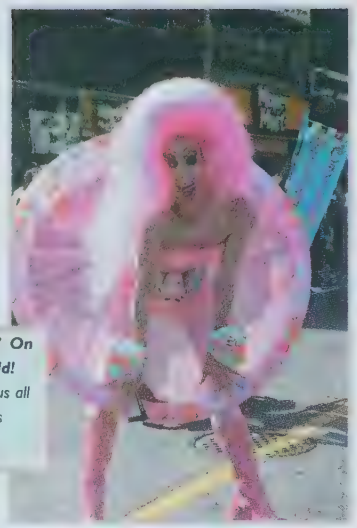
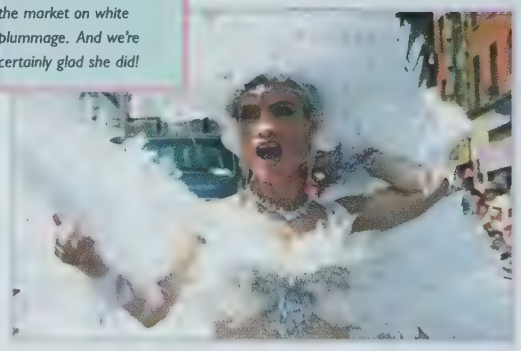
A young participant hauls out the 'big gun' for this special occasion

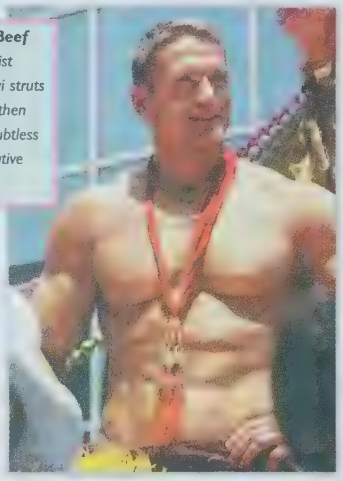


Y'Aint Got Nuthin' On Me, Molly Ringwald!
Heidi Liscious shows us all how "pretty in pink" is really done...

I'm Auditioning For Swan Lake
As what—the whole flock?! This gorgeous creature seems to have cornered the market on white plummage. And we're certainly glad she did!

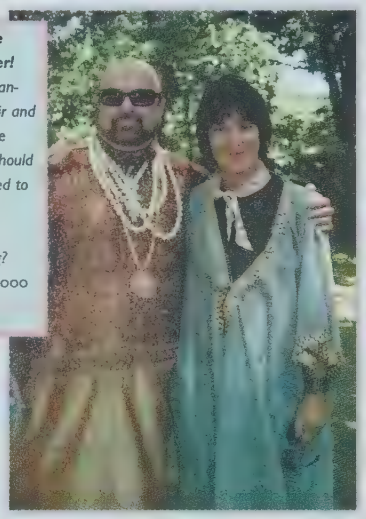


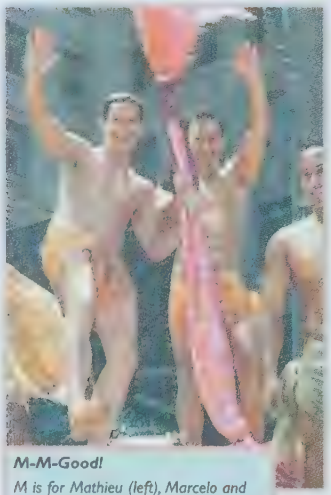
It's Just A Little Something I Threw On...
A tropical twist to summertime attire—good thing this isn't Yukon Pride!



Cookin'The Beef
CoverGUY finalist Csongor Szilagyi struts his stuff—and then some—for (doubtless many) appreciative onlookers.

Forget Benedict—We Like This Pope Better!
Parade Marshal (and man-about-town) Salah Bachir and Canuck Rock icon Carole Pope pause for a pic. Should that lyric now be changed to "Makes me cream my caftan"? Or are those djellabas they're wearing? Aargh—show biz is soooo complicated!





M-M-Good!
M is for Mathieu (left), Marcelo and marvellous, at least from what we can see here. You know, some people just can't do orange, but not these gents...

Silver Sister
Apparently all that glitters is not gold, after all—at least on this doll-baby. Judging from that sunburn, though, it looks like that ensemble has some pretty potent reflective qualities, too!

These Hairdos Have Attitude And Altitude...
Suffering the heat in foam rubber coiffures, a pair of bewiged Air Canada reps bring a touch of "air hostess" glam to the proceedings.

Salah Days
Philanthropist Salah Bachir enjoys a moment of serenity aboard his colourful parade float.

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REVIEW

By John Ayres

Saved by the Belles is the kind of movie that makes you wish that you'd scored some magic mushrooms instead of making a batch of popcorn. Not that you'd need any of the former, though: this flick is trippy enough all on its own. From its slick, kaleidoscopic start I had a feeling that I was going to like this film, a feeling that was, for the most part, right on the mark.

Belles is the kind of film that you might find terribly pretentious if it weren't so fun and light-hearted in its approach. At the centre of it all is Brian, a magnificent black drag queen who goes by the name Sheena Hershey, and his acerbic, Crayola-haired roommate Scarlet. Both are fixtures in the Montréal club scene—which is seen here at its most vividly extravagant—and they wield their power with the aplomb of old-school Hollywood stars. Sheena and Scarlet's world is shaken up when they cross paths with Sean, a handsome young amnesiac they name Chris for convenience sake. Filled with a mixture of compassion and lust for new adventure, the two take him back to their lair, an abandoned ferry filled with a colourful menagerie of assorted friends and scenemakers, to embark on what is to become an enduring friendship.

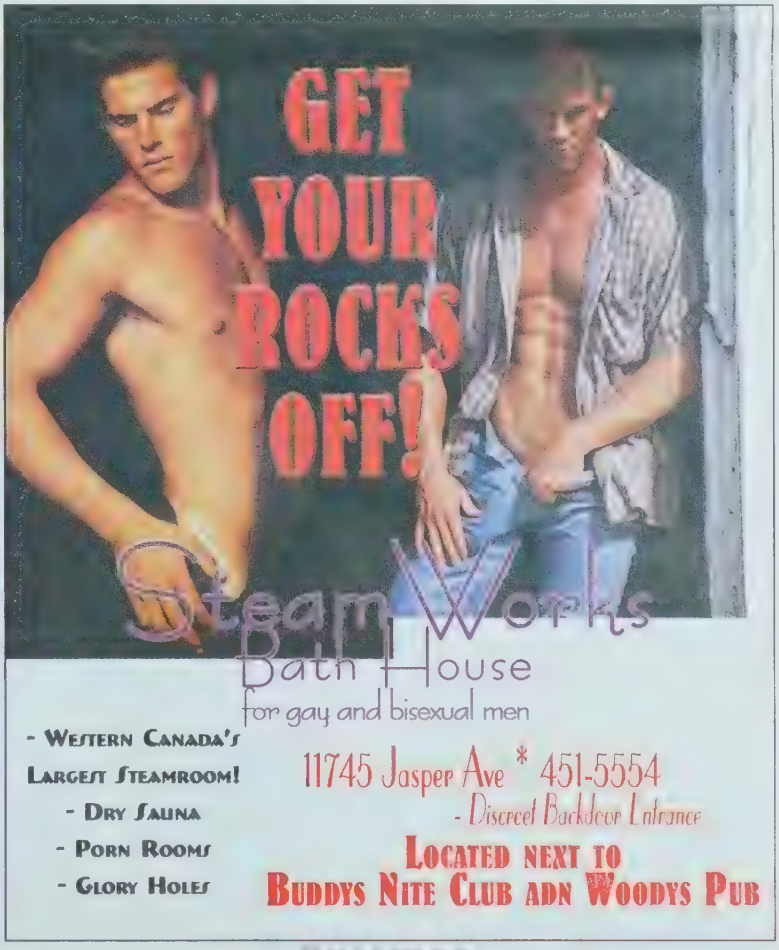
In terms of plot, that's pretty much all I can share at this point—not because there is any great secret to be revealed but because the genesis of their friendship, and the results of their interaction, form the basic premise of this movie. The story itself is linear in the same way that veins are linear, with various elements of plot either running parallel or intersecting at any given time. This is, on occasion, quite jarring to experience, much in the same way as living life with any sense of self-awareness and emotion. If pressed to assign a genre for this movie I'd have to say "sit-com", although in this case that's "situation commentary" as opposed to comedy. That said, I must point out that *Saved by the Belles* is at times extremely funny, although that is less where its strength lies when viewed as a character-driven piece.

Much of *Belles*' success is due to its two main characters, expertly played by co-creator Brian C. Warren (Sheena) and Karen Simpson (Scarlet). In a bold move, director and co-creator Ziad Touma chose to have the Sean/Chris character played by two different actors to reflect his conflicted identity. Both Steven Turpin and Danny Gilmore (of *Lilies* fame) are strong in the role, although it does takes some getting used to having a character change physically almost from scene to scene.

What is perhaps most impressive about *Saved by the Belles* is that the entire film is made up of a series of improvisations, and the actors' work is even credited as such at the film's end. In hindsight, I think I would have appreciated their efforts even more having been aware of it from the start, but the net result was essentially the same: easy, credible performances that blur the line between acting and reality, scoring on the high end of the John Waters scale.

Also very worthy of note is the visual punch that this film delivers from opening montage to final credits. Director of Photography François Dutil and Art Director Christian Legaré have gone to extraordinary lengths to ensure that, even though it is set in Montréal, *Belles* conjures up its own world in the tradition of such films as *Liquid Sky* or *Salome's Last Dance*. At times the action seems more like a series of cross-processed photographs tossed into the air under a strobe light instead of a motion picture, a technique that captures the claustrophobic fabulousness of clubland to a 'T'. Other touches, such as a rapid-fire montage of spinning succulents, contribute greatly to the overall feeling of "otherness" Sheena and Scarlet's world possesses. This mood is further enhanced by an excellent soundtrack contributed by a mixture of international artists and some of Montréal's best-kept indie "secrets".

While on the topic of 'aural pleasures', I have to say that this film's only major drawback is in its sound quality. All too often, character dialogue was delivered in what seems like a whisper, and then a loud sound effect or piece of music would screech out of the speakers. Much time was spent on remote control duty, my finger on a hair-trigger lest the 10+ volume suddenly need to go down to a more manageable 3. However, despite this minor annoyance, *Saved by the Belles* offered a wonderful departure, a glimpse into a world other than (at the time) the all-pervasive Calgary Stampede. Easily worthy of a second viewing, and quite likely a third. Merveilleux!



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Don't let the August doldrums bite—Mars and Neptune will play off Jupiter throughout the month, feeding our dreams, energizing our desires and generally pushing us in lucky directions. Party on, darlings, and don't trip at the curb.

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

Friends and partners will have some great ideas as to how you can spend your dough. The truth, proud Ram, is that August will be chock-a-block with hefty purchases that can satisfy your every whim. This largesse will also act as an aphrodisiac with almost anyone you choose, so squeeze and spread your juice around. They say money can't buy happiness, but let's prove the skeptics wrong!

TAURUS (APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

Queer Bulls will have excessive amounts of energy that can be channelled into success this August, thanks to Mars, Neptune and Jupiter. Expend it on the job and with anything that plots out long-term professional plans. (Do you have any?) There will be something about you that encourages a certain someone to give you a shot at the big prize. Is your gun loaded? Bang-bang!

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

Adventure will await you this August and it won't be in the usual way. Get out of your rut and routine, pink Twin, and try something (or *someone*) totally different. Mars will conspire with Jupiter to provide a few fun surprises and sparks of inspiration. Travel will be highlighted, but only if it takes you to mind-altering, consciousness-raising destinations. My advice? Try Maui, not Newark.

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)

Changes in your home situation will prove to be very lucky this August, gay Crab. If you have been eyeing that palace by the beach, consider making a deposit. Improving your home surroundings will not only create a physically pleasant environment , it will also have an emotionally recharging impact. Mars will recruit a few good pals to help you with the heavy lifting... of the cocktails!

LEO (JULY 24 - AUGUST 23)

Hard work will pay off this August, at least that's what Mars tells me. But, frankly, it's not good enough to quietly do the work. No effort gets recognized without *some* buzz. Jupiter is ready to give you press points and you're deserving of all accolades. You've been a shining star professionally, so don't be shy—tell others how great you are. Roar it Out, proud Lion.

VIRGO (AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 23)

Queer Virgins will have itchy feet this August. Mars can't sit still and Jupiter promises to have all the funds you need for fun, fun, fun. Travel will not only broaden your horizons but will also expand your social life. Be sure to tie off any loose ends at work before you escape to parts unknown. It would be a shame to have another mountain (of paper) to climb when you return.

LIBRA (SEPTEMBER 24 - OCTOBER 23)

How hot can your August get, gay Libra? Pretty hotsy-totsy thanks to energetic Mars. Revel in it and plan to get your face out there where you can meet and greet. Jupiter will give you charm, panache and enough good luck to be able to maximize every encounter. There's no telling who'll be waiting to get to know you. Hmmm... is that in the *biblical* sense?

SCORPIO (OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)

No matter how secretive you are apt to be, August will demand that you lose that straitjacket and be true to yourself. Lucky Jupiter will feed you all sorts of useful information through the strangest sources, but go with your gut, proud Scorp. Don't ask why, just listen and then act upon it. Some of these missives will include important relationship advice. Do you need any?

SAGITTARIUS (NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 22)

If the mirror has not been kind, use August to try for a better reflection. Gay Archers will have the energy to turn over a new, healthy leaf that will not only enhance the image in their own eyes but will also create waves in their social pond. Jupiter sez share your high spirits with a group of new souls. If they say beauty is only skin deep, show more of that gorgeous skin.

CAPRICORN (DECEMBER 23 - JANUARY 20)

While I know that it is not in your nature, pink Caps can glide through their career this August with the least amount of effort and the maximum amount of reward. Sipping coffee is seen as pivotal information gathering and staring out the window is viewed as creative brain work. Will you score points for taking a nap under your desk? Don't let this become a habit, buddy!

AQUARIUS (JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 19)

You'll manage to make your opinions known internationally by just staying close to home this August. News of your exploits and talents will travel, even if you don't. So, if money is tight or time is short, don't mope quietly around the house; reach out as best as you can and bring the world to you. It is your base of operations if you do more than the lazy basics.

PISCES (FEBRUARY 20 - MARCH 20)

Guppies seem to know just what to say to get whom and what they want... at least this will be so for the month of August. Do you have your eye on a certain special someone? Make your intentions known. And while you reap the personal benefits of your charismatic *bon mots*, be sure that you spread more universal truths around as well. Get off your stump and make a speech.

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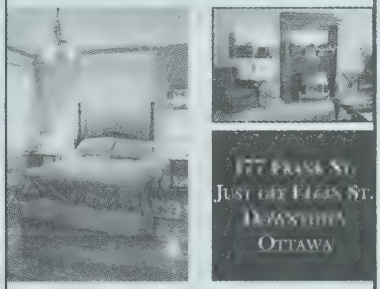

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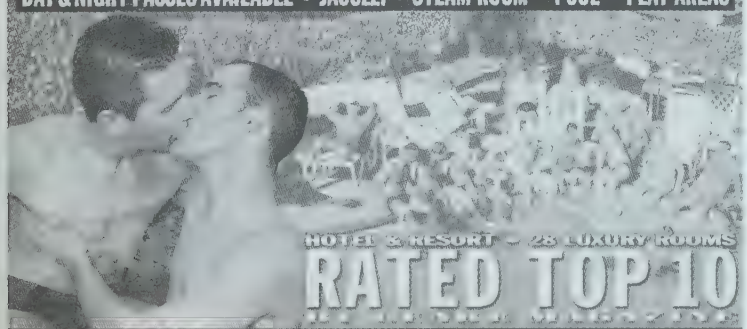

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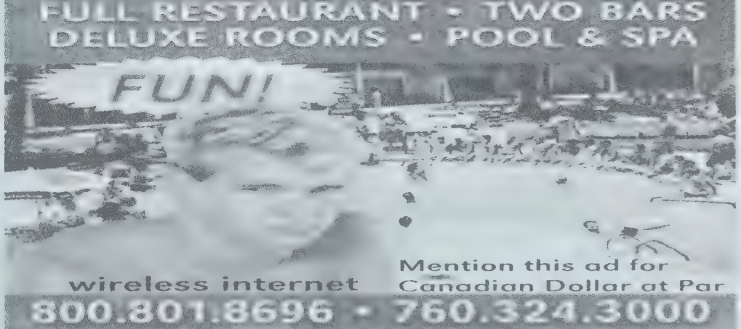

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Dear FREDDY

Hello Freddy,

Cruiseline's phone number (777-9494) keeps appearing as an outgoing call on my partner's cell phone (usually once a day when he's "at work"); is he up to something?

John Doe

Calgary

Dear John,

If I had to make an educated guess, I'd say maybe the poor guy's starved for conversation. Who the hell writes a one-sentence Dear Freddy letter? Oh, wait—you! If that's all you can manage to send me in a time of crisis, John, I can only imagine how much of a cricket chirp it must be around your love nest. I think maybe your bf is using the 'line to test his hearing out... Still, seeing that you're a nice guy (I'm basing this on the fact that you wrote me and not one of those cranky old women in the broadsheets), I'm going to take a run at your problem. Really, dear, this may just be an innocent little quirk of your mate, a way to "get himself some strange" without actually cheating. A lot of guys use that system for chat 'n' whack and nothing more. However, it can be argued that there's a "slippery slope" factor at play here—particularly when that slope has hubby's pre-cum all over it. I wouldn't ordinarily advocate having a discussion about this, but if you're already checking his phone records and being snoopy, then maybe there's already a trust issue or disharmony in the relationship. And speaking of snoopy—Snoopy, actually—did you know that naughty pup is on that line all the time? And this isn't a mere phone dalliance; this is a full-on, knick-knack-paddy-whack, give the dog a boner scenario. Woodstock even had one of those sex addiction groups do an intervention when ol' Snoop disappeared for ten days on a meth-and-masturbation bender. And here's some gossip: most people think Snoopy's an all-white dog with black ears, but actually he's all black: that white coloration is from a thick, crusty layer of—wait, I think I've gone off-topic here... My advice? Brush up on your conversation skills and have a chat with the boyf. Then sit down to write me and nice, long letter about the outcome.

Best of luck,

Fred

Dear Freddy,

I recently had what I thought was the pleasure of attending a friend's wedding. My best girlfriend Sharma and I got all decked out and went and had a fabulous time together. But here's the thing: a week after the big event my friend's husband called me up—he's Groom Two, and I've known Groom One longer—and gave me hell for bringing, get this, a female date to their wedding. He says that it's rude to bring a woman to a gay wedding because it just reinforces "heterosexual stereotypes". What?! I'm actually quite p.o.'d right now, both about his comments and the fact that Groom One, who is technically more my friend, didn't call me himself. Do you think I should call him or just let it go and avoid the two of them for awhile until things cool off? I'm honestly shocked by this and also quite hurt.

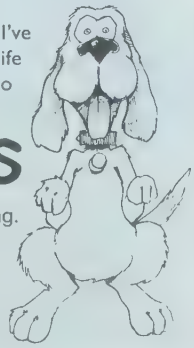
James B.

Dear James,

That is probably the stupidest thing I've ever heard—and I've heard a lot of stupid things after this many years! I can't for the life of me figure out why the "happy" couple found your actions so offensive. Surely to gods they've seen a fag hag before, haven't they? I mean, it's not like you brought Elsie Wayne or Ralph Klein's wife as your date, right? I find it hard to believe that they would get so worked up about all this, as there must have been other women (co-workers, sisters, manicurists, mothers of the grooms) present at the wedding. If it was meant to be a men-only function (read: bathhouse with boutonnieres) they should have specified that on the invitation. What's bothering me about this—and you, obviously—is that your pal Groom One didn't call to voice the complaint himself. This either means he is a) too angry to talk to you right now, which is stupid and uncalled-for, or b) completely unaware that his new hubby has made a federal case out of this. My money's on the latter. Perhaps now that rings are on fingers, Groom Two wants to try to alienate Groom One's friends and acquaintances as a measure of control. It happens, you know, although not usually in a matrimonial situation. I suggest you call Groom One and discuss the matter with him yourself. If he *is* angry, it'll allow the two of you to clear the air. If he's not, and his husband has made a big issue out of nothing, it'll give the two of them a wonderful chance to have their first big blow-out fight as a married couple. See, James: win-win.

Kisses on your pink parts,

Freddy ▼



Write to me, Dears

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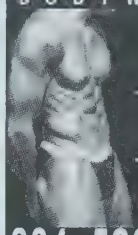

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I am a young man a little over 40 years of age who would very much like to correspond with gay, bisexual or lesbian people from Canada, irrespective of sex or age. My chief interests are writing, reading books, listening to music, watching movies, going for long scenic walks (hiking), travelling, jogging, swimming, flora and fauna and nature in general. I have been hoping and wanting to correspond with people from Canada for years but have so far been quite unsuccessful to find gay pen-pals from that country. I now hope that via *Outlooks* luck will eventually be on my side. Please help me if you can as it would really make me so happy!
Alec Busch
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Gibelery Abdul
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Dormaa-Ahenko B/A
Ghana W/ Africa

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Emmanuel Dadzie
P.O. Box 1343
Sunyan, B-A
Ghana, W-A

Gay partners wanted! 24-year-old African (Ghanaian) gay guy, black in colour with black hair. I enjoy hugging, kissing and am serious about finding a partner. Would like to hear from you!
Write: Emmanuel Boateng
Post Office Box 2356
Sunyani B-A
Ghana, W. Africa

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Iddrisu Moro
Post Box 96
Sunyani B-A
Ghana, W-A

Application for gay partners!
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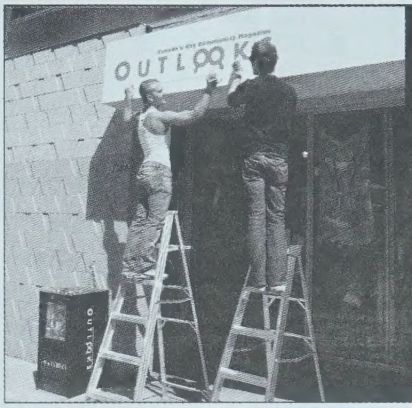

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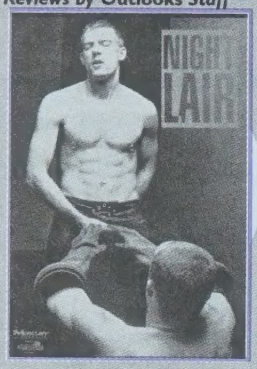
Night Lair

From: Mercury Releasing

Reviews by Outlooks Staff



Featuring: Andreas Stich, Lupus, Rick, Damion, Richard Bauer, Norbert Bergmann, Waler, Harald Fleischer, Cliff Inch, Lance de Moor

Running Time: 92 minutes

As porno flicks go, in a dime-a-dozen world, German import *Night Lair* is the equivalent of a blue-chip stock. Artfully shot and scored with a great soundtrack, it is likely the closest thing to "art house" fare that you're likely to find in the XXX section of your local video store.

Scene one opens with hottie Andreas Strich and his boyfriend necking and enthusiastically exploring one another on a subway car. Once off the train, they stroll down the street to a club called Tom's, where the two "branch out" with some of the other patrons. As Andreas explores the club, he falls down a flight of stairs and lands at the feet of a rather determined leather daddy. Seeing that Andreas is somewhat dazed, the daddy gives him a miner's headlamp to help him find his way in the dark—or at least as far as the daddy wants him to go. And, it seems, Andreas wants to go as far as he can!

Meanwhile, upstairs, Andreas' boyfriend is teasing the palate (esophagus, and possibly even lungs) of a hungry businessman who abandoned his beer in favour of something a little stronger. Shortly thereafter, this twosome grows to include almost every other patron in the bar, joined in various combinations and contortions of lust. As all this reaches a climax, the action cuts away to a porn theatre, where a clean-cut blond jock ventures into the red-lit bathroom to relieve himself and winds up in a dark basement maze filled with "friendly" men wearing miner's headlamps like the one given to Andreas earlier. Eventually, this young stud finds Andreas and the two explore the ultimate in emotional detachment: "sex" from behind a Plexiglas wall that has rubber gloves installed right into the centre of the pane. Talk about playing safe! Once finished, blondie continues his journey and, along the way, runs into more dicks than anyone could imagine—anyone besides, of course, *Night Lair* directors Christian Huber and Horst Braun...

While all this is going on, two security officers are up in a closed-circuit observation room doing their best to imitate the activities seen on their screens. Although they do a pretty good job, their efforts pale in comparison to Andreas' own exploits, with the insatiable blond boy not far behind in the ratings game. Ever helpful, Andreas eventually joins the pair to give them a lesson in how it's *really* done. He then goes on to share his carnal expertise of all the other horny men in the basement, a task already taken up by the blond hunk from the porno theatre.

Finally, after much ado about, well—*everything*, Andreas and his boyfriend reunite in the subway station where they began and walk off into the night, likely in search of sleep and nothing more after their impressive sex club marathon!

Review sponsored by Express Video
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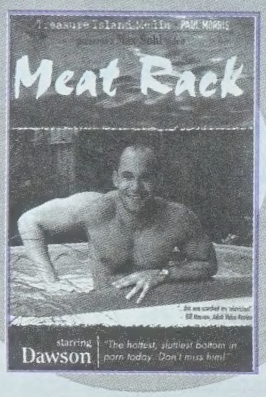
(780) 482-7480 Email: exec.express@shaw.ca

RATING: OUT OF FIVE POSSIBLE STARS

MUSIC: ★★★★★(★) SET: ★★★★★
BODIES: ★★★★ STORY: ★★★
ACTION SCENES: ★★★★★

Meat Rack

From: Treasure Island Media



Featuring: Kurt Kaiser, Shannen Michael, Chris Neal, Joe Sarge, Jeff Grove, Bryan Hansen, Little Joe, Sonny Roberts, Seth Scott, Dawson

Running Time: 91 minutes

Whether you're a New Yorker or a tourist, the best place to escape the summer heat is on legendary Fire Island, where you might find some action hot enough to rival the noonday sun. Here, beautiful sandy beaches emerging from a fringe of trees and shrubs surround the small island, making it a very enticing gay getaway. Best of all, this carnal Eden is only a short ferry ride away from Manhattan.

Porn star Dawson knows it's the perfect place for him to meet some of the finest, most masculine tops—the kind of men who are always ready for a good time. Variety is the spice of life on Fire Island and, like the many varieties of Heinz, fifty-seven is the number of different men that Dawson is ready to tackle—that is, if he can find them and fit them all in during his short vacation in this domestic paradise.

Strolling along the boardwalk at Fire Island Pines, he encounters Joe Sarge and Chris Neal lurking in the nearby woods. Their leather and denim combination provides a perfect distraction to entertain him on a sunny afternoon, and Dawson quickly submits to these two well-hung beefcakes.

After this bit of outdoor exercise, Dawson decides some time in the hot tub alone would be a perfect way to refresh himself and get ready for even more hot action. However, it's only a short time before muscle-stud Little Joe arrives to join him. Once the newcomer strips down and reveals himself to Dawson, it's hard to understand why the word "Little" is associated with Joe. Always ready for some fun, Dawson gives Little Joe a reason to work up a sweat—one that has no connection to the temperature on the thermometer. Afterwards, they cool down together in a shady spot, where a hammock for two awaits their exhausted bodies.

Not too far away in a shady nook, five studs are enjoying a circle jerk in the late afternoon sun. It doesn't take very long for this to turn into a poolside orgy, and Dawson is only too happy to join them and be the perfect bottom for this horse-hung group of men. Even the poolside shower stall becomes a major part of the hot action, where the whole activity of "showering" can take on new meaning.

Dawson proves that Fire Island lives up to its reputation and that the temperature is always hot wherever he stops by to share in a good time. *Meat Rack* offers viewers a good time, whatever their tastes; be sure to check it out the next time you need a little hot weather "relief".

Review sponsored by www.MaleDVD.ca, Canada's largest online XXX gay DVD rental service

RATING: OUT OF FIVE POSSIBLE STARS

MUSIC: ★★★★ SET: ★★★★★
BODIES: ★★★★★ STORY: ★★
ACTION SCENES: ★★★★

HAPPENINGS AND KUDOS VANCOUVER

Upcoming events

& Kudos

The Four Feathers Society (FFS) is a tribe of aboriginal and non-aboriginal men who self-identify as being gay or two-spirited. The society strives to provide opportunities for its members to strengthen and heal their bodies, hearts, minds and spirits. ***GayWarriors, the Two-Spirit Drumming Circle and Potluck Feast, the Pride in Art Exhibition*** and a forum on domestic violence called ***"Healing Families and Healing Communities"*** are some of our projects. The men on the society's board want to make a difference in gay and two-spirit men's lives by providing ways for them to feel valued, whole and good about themselves.

Four Feathers is grounded in spiritual principles and many First Nation practices. We believe many gay/two spirit men find it impossible to return to organized religion but still desire a spiritual connection. The FFS offers a way to do this – a spiritual path, serenity, a reconnection to a sacred place in the circle of life -- through First Nations' teachings. We encourage gay/two-spirit men to take active roles in their healing and in the healing of others, and in that way create a fellowship of men in healthier gay/two-spirit communities.

GAY WARRIORS

The Gay Men's Talking Circle: GayWarriors

GayWarriors is a gathering of gay and two-spirit men who are reconnecting to spiritual way of living; the circle is also a good place for troubled men to find support and healing. Participants smudge, learn skills, gain awareness and share their wisdom, strengths and life experiences in a spiritual, safe environment. We go on outings as well: camping, sweat lodge ceremonies and other fun and spiritual times together. **Thursday Nights**, 7:30 pm, St. Paul's Anglican Church, 1140 Jervis St, lower hall, Vancouver, BC.

Two Spirit Drumming Circle and Potluck Feast

The drumming circle is for all GLBTs to sing, drum and celebrate our two-spiritedness. We sing songs from Celtic, Hawaiian, folk, and First Nations traditions. This clean and sober event is held on **first Monday of each month**, 7:00 pm, St. Paul's Anglican Church, 1140 Jervis St, lower hall. Vancouver, BC. Next drumming circles will be **September 5th** and **October 3rd.**

Four Feathers Membership

We are starting a FFS membership drive in August. We are looking for gay/two spirit men who want to take active role in providing healthier environment to gay men to gather, heal and celebrate. Visit our website find out more about our membership. In September will be our first FFS feasts of honor for bring us together as Gay/Two Spirit men and to honor people who make difference in the community.
Phone: **604 683-3884** Send us e-mail: **fourfeatherstribe@shaw.ca** Or visit our website: **www.members.shaw.ca/fourfeatherstribe**

Bingo For Life has moved to The Oasis Pub!

THE VANCOUVER FRIENDS FOR LIFE SOCIETY

the Oasis Pub — Unveiling the Spirits!

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OUTLOOKS

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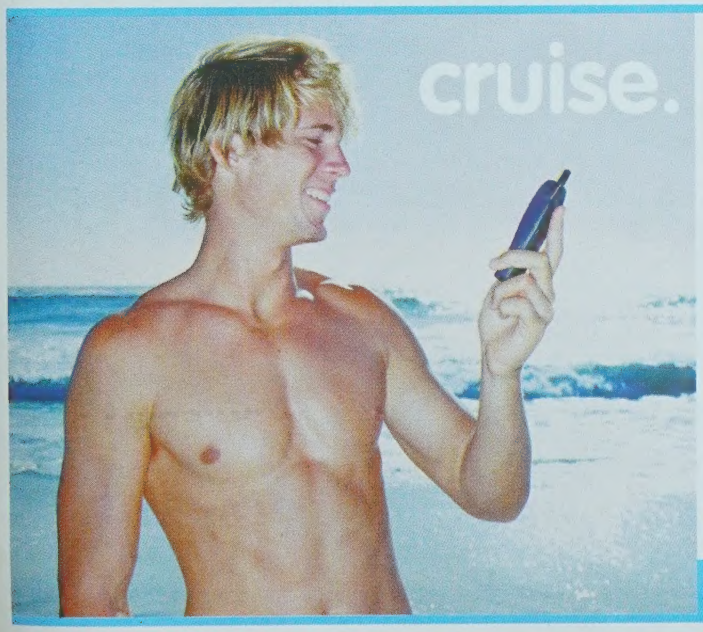

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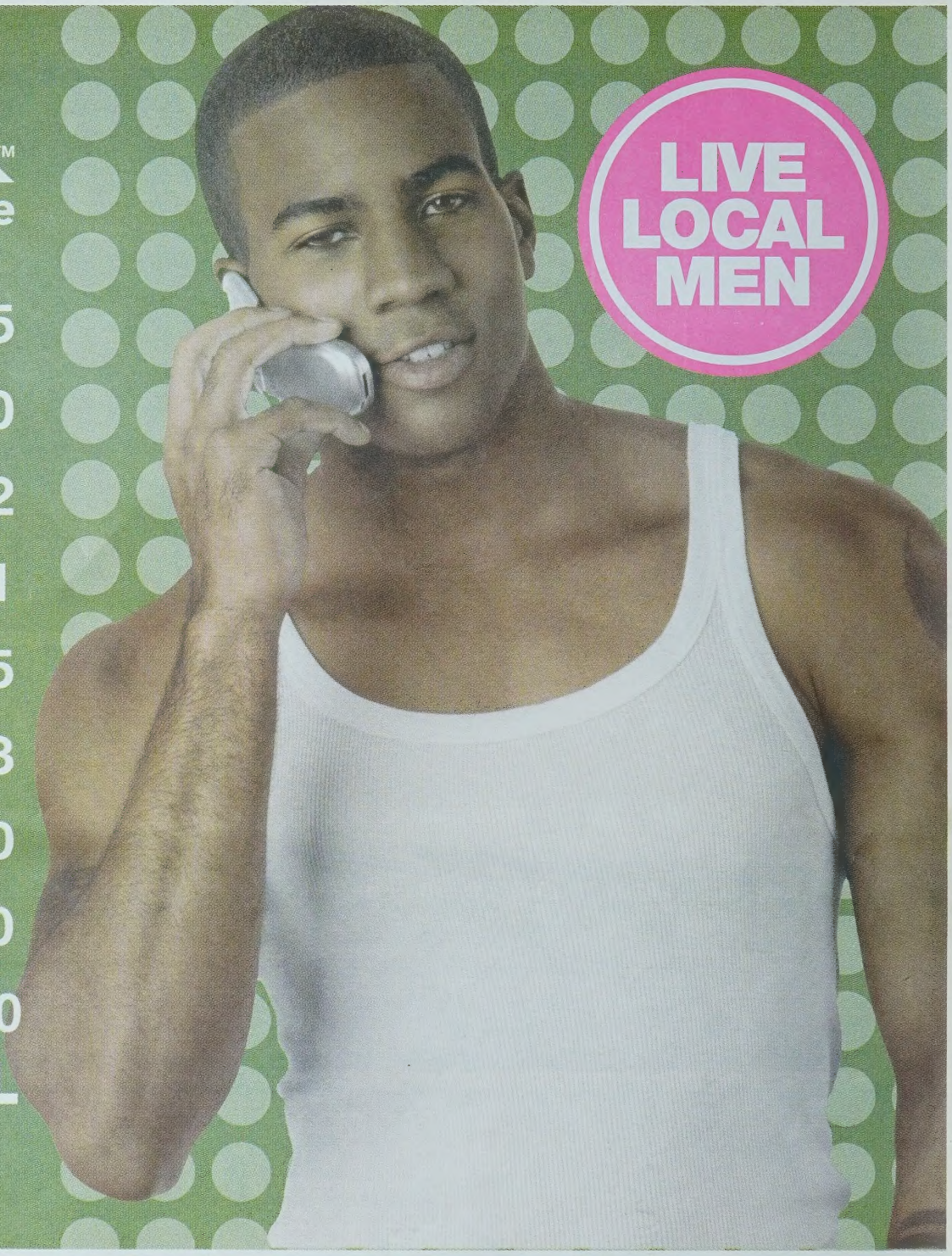

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